

**THE DYNAMICS OF SMALL ARMS
TRANSFERS IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN
INSURGENCIES**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an attempt to fill the theoretical and empirical gap that exists in current small arms literature, which has failed to examine and identify the different aspects that are involved with small arms transfers in Southeast insurgencies. Small arms not only play a significant role in all internal conflicts throughout the world, but they are of particular concern right through Asia, where civil wars have tended to last longer than those in any other region. This study uses a comprehensive dataset that defines active armed conflict in Southeast Asia during 2002. This has allowed for the detailed analysis of three countries within Southeast Asia, where government forces have been involved in active armed conflict with insurgent groups. Important aspects of this thesis include; the analysis of external and internal sources insurgent groups are able to secure both financially and militarily; the most important sources of supply for insurgent groups obtaining small arms; and how the supply, use and accumulation of these small arms by insurgent groups have affected internal conflict. This study suggests that internal sources, rather than external sources, are more important for insurgent groups in securing forms of finances and weaponry. The most important sources of supply for obtaining small arms would also tend to come from internal sources. Furthermore, it is likely that variables of intra-state conflicts, such as duration and intensity, have been highly affected by small arms usage. This thesis concludes by suggesting that the study of how insurgent groups obtain different forms of finances and resources is equally as important as the analysis of how insurgent groups obtain small arms.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFP	Philippine Armed Forces
AGAM	Angkatan Gerakan Aceh Merdeka
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
ASNLF	Aceh Sumatra National Liberation Front
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPB	Communist Party of Burma
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
DKBA	Democratic Karen Buddhist Army
GAM	Gerakan Aceh Movement (Free Aceh Movement)
KIA	Kachin Independence Organisation
KNA	Karen National Association
KNDO	Karen National Defence Organisation
KNLA	Karen National Liberation Army
KNU	Karen National Union
KNUF	Karen National United Front
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
NDF	National Democratic Front
NISAT	Norwegian Institute of Small Arms Transfers
NPA	New Peoples Army
PCTC	Philippine Centre for Transnational Crime
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organisation
SEA	Southeast Asia
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
SSA	Shan State Army

SSA-S	Shan State Army-South
SSPP	Shan State Progress Party
TNI	Indonesian Armed Forces
UN	United Nations
UWSA	United Wa State Army

Chapter 1

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE SMALL ARMS PLAY WITHIN INTRA-STATE CONFLICT

1.1 Introduction: The Effects of Small Arms Use in Intra-State Conflicts

Small arms in the 21st century pose a major problem for countries that are easily susceptible to internal conflict. Small arms give non-state actors the ability to initiate and carry out continuing armed violence, through the use of these particular weapons. Access to small arms by insurgent groups is a key variable in the conflict cycle of an internal conflict. It is this access of supply that allows non-state actors the ability to continue fighting in internal conflict. While demand for small arms in internal conflict usually exceeds supply, it is this supply of weaponry that is crucial for insurgent groups to effectively wage civil war against a sovereign government. Without any form of small arms supply non-state actors remain powerless in their goal to defeat government forces.

Small arms establish a threat to state survival in weak or failing states, as highlighted by Klare (2004) who states, “it means that antigovernment formations can readily assemble sufficient weaponry to mount a revolution or insurgency” (ibid:123). Small arms have many distinctive features according to Klare (2004) that make them attractive to ethnic militias, insurgent forces, criminal bands and other paramilitary forces. They are light weight allowing a soldier to move on foot more easily, they are small meaning they are easy to hide and conceal, and they are readily affordable and available (ibid:123). It is these characteristics alone that allow small arms to be a decisive factor within internal conflicts. As Klare (2004) states, “for all these reasons – ease of operation, lightness, affordability, concealability global availability – small arms and light weapons constitute the principal instrument of violence in all of the internal conflicts of the post Cold War era” (ibid:125).

Small arms are responsible for as “much as 90% of the casualties in current regional conflicts and civil wars” (Erwin, 1998 cited in Sislin and Pearson, 2001:17). According to the Small Arms Survey (2003), “small arms misuse is one of the leading causes of fatal and non-fatal injury. An estimated 300,000 people are killed as a result of small arm misuse each year in conflict” (ibid:132). Furthermore, “light weapons were the only arms used in 46 of 49 conflicts since 1990 (Klare,1999:21). The percentage of civilians killed in conflicts due to small arm use is estimated by the International Committee of the Red Cross to be more than 35% (Red Cross, June 1999 cited in Cakier, 2002:263). Arms that are transferred through black-market and covert governmental channels that find there way into the hands of non-state actors play a disproportionate role in fuelling ethnic and internal conflicts (Klare, 1999:22). Generally weapons transfers will consist of small arms and light weapons, because of their ability to be recycled from previous conflicts and their ease of availability.

The supply of small arms to insurgent groups has a direct effect on the life cycle of internal conflict in a region. As Fearon (2002) states “civil wars tend to last a long time when neither side can disarm the other, causing a military stalemate” (ibid:2). It is virtually impossible to stop the flow of arms supply to insurgent groups because of the many borders states are forced to defend. This is in addition to many of the states lacking the financial resources to monitor their borders to incoming ships, making arms smuggling extremely difficult to defend against. Furthermore, governments in various states are virtually powerless to stop raids and ambushes from occurring on military and police targets within regions that are prone to insurgent rebellions. These factors can result in military stalemates between governments and insurgent forces in many weak states. Governments in many underdeveloped countries cannot stop the supply of small arms to insurgent forces, while on the other hand; insurgent forces are not equipped with enough heavy weaponry to defeat governments through military means.

Small Arm use in civil wars can also be a direct result of a failed state. This is highlighted by Rotberg (2004) who states, “in most failed states government troops battle armed revolts led by one or more rivals” (ibid:5). This is the case in most underdeveloped

countries, where governments face armed conflict from more than one non-state group, who may even be from the same ethnic background. As Rotberg (2004) points out, “the civil wars that characterise failed states usually stem from or have roots in ethnic, religious, linguistic, or other intercommunal enmity” (ibid:30). In general these are the main causes that directly effect conflict in many underdeveloped and third world countries and cause states to collapse in different continents throughout the world. To prevent states collapsing, “it is essential to realise action above and beyond controlling illicit weapons, by tackling widespread civilian demand, security personnel’s misuse of weapons and the transfer of weapons to non-state armed groups” (Pattugalan, 2003:15).

Arms transfers can also occur in an internal or civil conflict, when an insurgent group needs external supplies and aid, one form of which is arms. Analysing arms transfers to non-state actors, needs to take into account who supplies, how much and with what impact. Arms transfers are common in internal conflicts in regions such as Southeast Asia, as they are seen as a way of influencing government decision making through the use or threat of use of violence. Light arms and primitive implements generally are more readily at hand and subject to less government control than heavy weapons (Sislin and Pearson, 2001:38). Hence they are generally the weapons of choice by non-state actors in intra-state conflict.

1.2 The Problems Associated with Small Arms Transfers to Insurgent Groups in Southeast Asia

The transfer of small arms and light weapons to insurgent groups in Southeast Asia has become a contentious issue for governments and their leaders in the region. Not only is Southeast Asia home to a magnitude of weak states, but the borders of many countries in the region are susceptible to arms smuggling and trafficking. Furthermore, ethnic divisions and cultural differences plague the region causing greater instability and making it prone to internal conflict. Arms transfers to insurgent groups in Southeast Asia have continued to impact and influence the outcome of many civil wars in the region. Insurgent groups in the Philippines and Indonesia such as the New Peoples Army (NPA);

the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and the Gerakan Aceh Movement (GAM) have been militarily engaged against their respective governments for a number of decades and as a result has progressed the onset of civil war, as well as increasing the duration and longevity of violent conflict in Southeast Asia.

This thesis will be looking at the problems associated with small arms use by insurgent groups within internal conflict in Southeast Asia. Currently very little literature is available on small arms transfers to non-state actors in Southeast Asia within the context of internal conflicts or civil wars in the region. One of the main factors for using Southeast Asia as a case study is that the area of small arms in internal conflict in the region has largely been understudied and neglected. Furthermore, Fearon (2002) has found that “civil wars in Asia have lasted longer on average than those in any other region” (ibid:11). Accordingly the rate of outbreak in Asia for civil wars was the highest than any other region, at three per hundred country-years (Fearon and Latin, 2003:77). This is reflected in the increased average duration of civil wars worldwide which has increased from two years in 1947 to about 15 years in 1999 (Fearon and Latin, 2003:78). The increase in duration of civil wars in Southeast Asia can be indirectly attributed to the increase in small arm proliferation the region has faced over the last few decades. This has resulted in the increasing misuse of small arms and weapons especially by non-state actors and fuelled the fire for many of the internal conflicts.

Capie (2002) has been the first scholar to initiate the first comprehensive study of small arms production and transfers both licit and illicit in Southeast Asia. Capie’s (2002) study concludes that Southeast Asia has a serious problem with the leakage of illegally owned weapons and with the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons (ibid:iii). Further to this Bedeski et al (1998) comments that there is potential for an explosive mix in Southeast Asia due to the economic shocks of recent years combined with the growing market in small arms (ibid:i). Previous studies by Chalk (1997) have highlighted the susceptibility of insurgent groups forming in Southeast Asian and initiating internal conflict, because of the number of post-independent states structures throughout Southeast Asia that contain significant sectors of population who do not identify either

with their ruling groups or territorial boundaries, such as Indonesia, the Philippines and Burma (ibid:17). It is these three countries that form the case studies in this thesis.

There are numerous sources of external and internal supply of small arms available to insurgent groups in Southeast Asia. For many insurgent groups in the region small arms are seen as a means of influencing or changing government decision making by the use of armed violence. Since the end of the Cold War, the nature of armed conflict has changed from being predominately inter-state to an intra-state based conflict. As Kramer (2001) comments, “very few resources have been committed to analyzing the small arms situation in Southeast Asia, largely because small arms have only recently been viewed as an issue of national security” (ibid:2). Furthermore each country in Southeast Asia is affected by small arms in a different way and to a different degree (Kramer, 2001:2). This makes it hard for the different states to formulate one policy that can be put in place throughout all the countries in Southeast Asia. However more recently governments in Southeast Asia have become increasingly worried about the growing illicit trade in small arms. Inadequate laws, regulations, policing of borders and corruption are a number of factors contributing to the ineffective control of stopping weapon flows to insurgent groups.

Arms that are supplied to insurgent forces can result in lengthy wars of attrition, as seen in previous civil wars, where arms supply has been a major determinant of outcomes in civil wars (Harkavy and Neuman, 1985, cited in Brzoska and Pearson, 1994:8). However on the other hand Brzoska and Pearson (1994) state that, “denial of arms supplies either freezes or erases force advantage, leading one or both sides to face higher costs and greater losses, thus presumably hastening the search for negotiated settlements” (ibid:9). This highlights the vital role small arms play in the onset and duration of a civil war in Southeast Asia. The problems associated with small arms supply to insurgent groups in Southeast Asia are numerous. Generally any weapons acquired by insurgent groups in the region are used to further their own goals and ambitions. While armed violence is only one way of achieving these goals, it generally is the rule rather than the exception.

Tracing arms transfers to insurgent groups is one way to combat and prevent arms supply to non-state actors. However as Bedeski et al, (1998) points out, “there is no comprehensive database of small arms and acquisitions and inventories available that is comparable to the one on large conventional weapons manufactured by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)” (ibid:16). However, this does not necessarily mean that a database cannot be created. As Klare (1999) states, “while much data has been collected on the topic, no uniform set of statistics has yet been discovered” (ibid:11). Small arms data to insurgent groups is not as detailed as major conventional weapons data-sets in the sense of allowing for major military goods transferred and the political and financial conditions of their transfer (Brozoska and Pearson, 1994:17).

However, like the data on conventional weapons, the perception of timing is also important in analyzing the affect of arms transfers in internal conflict. This is highlighted by Brozoska and Pearson (1994) who state, “timing and the perception of time is of utmost importance, not only because weapons arriving at the wrong time might be useless, but also because the timing of weapons deals affects political and military decision-making calculus even before the arms are delivered” (ibid:17). Insurgent groups are highly dependent on the timing of weapons supply in internal conflict. Without a constant source of supply of weapons, insurgent groups are powerless to force governments to the negotiation table or bringing their objectives into the attention of the public eye. However, surprisingly little has been written about the effect arms transfers have on the conflict cycles of internal conflict in Southeast Asia.

Tracing arms transfers to insurgent groups highlights the external and internal flows of logistical support insurgent groups are able to obtain. External and internal support includes financial as well as military aid. As Sislin and Pearson (2001) point out “we need to know much more about which suppliers, close at hand or at a distance, are crucial for the fuelling of war” (ibid:20). Currently there is little literature on the transfer and supply of small arms to insurgent groups in Southeast Asia. Furthermore there is even less literature on the effect small arms transfers to insurgent groups have on internal conflict in the region. Hence many unanswered questions exist in regards to arms

transfers to insurgent groups in Southeast Asia. A large reason for this is that many of the reports dealing with this subject come from a relatively small set of overseas correspondents and official statements by the local press and government (Sislin and Pearson, 2001:33). As Weezeman (2003) points out:

“Suppliers and recipients usually keep such transfers secret. The information on arms transfers to non-state actors that is reported in the public domain is difficult or impossible to verify. It may come from possibly biased and unreliable sources such as security organisations fighting the rebel groups on which they report” (ibid:17).

However as previously mentioned, the collection of data on small arms transfers in general has increased over the years. Projects like the Institute of International Studies, now exist which publishes an annual Small Arms Survey that primarily concentrates on the effects small arms have on the world’s poorest countries. However Weezman (2003) comments that “the usefulness of this data is very limited, as there is no indication of who received which weapons and how they were received” (ibid:18). Nevertheless, projects like these acknowledge the harm small arms have on internal conflict in underdeveloped countries, with small arms being implicated in more than 300,000 deaths each year, primarily in the worlds poorest countries (Small Arms Survey, 2003:iii).

Weezman (2003) also comments that the availability of data on transfers of small arms and other types of under-reported arms transfers has increased for two reasons. First increased interest in the issue of small arms has led to a significant increase in the resources for research into the issue (ibid:17). As previously mentioned this has led to data gathering efforts by organisations such as the Small Arms Survey, as well as the Norwegian Institute on Small Arms Transfers (NISAT). NISAT lists many new reports related directly to arms transfers to insurgent forces in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, NISAT collects the reported data on arms sources for insurgent groups in each of the conflicts within Southeast Asia. Second, more news resources are now easily accessible via the internet, and Weezeman (2003) finds that “for research on small arms it is necessary to scan a large number of news sources, including regional, national and subnational sources” (ibid:17).

This thesis is an attempt to fill these gaps in current research. Previously no study analysing the dynamics of arms transfers to non-state actors, such as insurgent groups has transpired. However, more recently articles have been published with initial steps looking at the analysis of arms transfers to insurgent groups in Southeast Asia. As Bedeski et al (1998) highlights:

“To complicate matters, the task of obtaining data on legal trade in weapons (including small arms) is rather challenging because such data is often considered sensitive material by many East Asian governments. However this author believes that the collection and analysis of comprehensive data is conceivable with future research (ibid:6)”.

Small arms are an important research area in Southeast Asia as highlighted by Pattugalan (2003) who states, “ASEAN has increased its awareness of arms smuggling and the human costs because of increased attention to terrorism and its links to illicit arms transfers. The focus on arms smuggling has however left out analysis and action on curbing demand and ending misuse” (ibid:15). It is this future research and the analysis of problems associated with small arms transfers to insurgent groups in Southeast Asia, that form the key methodology of this thesis.

1.3 Conceptual Clarifications

(i) Small Arms

Small Arms have been defined by the July 2003 United Nations (UN) Generally Assembly Document as generally “considered to be weapons manufactured to military specifications that are designed for personal use as opposed to those requiring several people or crew to operate and maintain. It includes revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, assault rifles, sub-machine guns and light machine guns” (ibid:14). Small arms differ from heavy weapons in that they can be carried by an individual or a small group of people, are relatively cheap to buy and require little or minimum technical knowledge. Heavy weapons on the other hand, which include tanks, aircraft fighters and surface to air missiles are expensive and require technical knowledge to operate. They are also hard in finding sources of supply, with only a few countries specializing in their production. For most insurgent groups, heavy weapons are virtually unobtainable.

Sislin and Pearson (2001) define two basic types of armament which might be employed by ethnic groups and states militarily. First there is 'major conventional weapons' as analysed and produced by SIPRI which tracks items such as, aircraft, armoured vehicles, artillery and warships. Furthermore a definition of heavy weapons has been generated by the UN Register of Conventional Arms, which divides heavy weapons into categories just mentioned (ibid:28). In contrast to major convention weapons, small arms are described by Sislin and Pearson (2001) as weapons that are excluded from the existing SIPRI data sets or the UN register, which focus only on major weapons (ibid:29). Furthermore, small arms can be carried by an individual soldier or in a light vehicle, which can be defined as the portability definition of light arms (Pearson, 1994:29). Klare (2004) comments that, "small arms occupy a middle ground between non-military firearms (hunting guns, sporting guns, handguns) and the major weapons used by modern military forces (tanks, artillery pieces, helicopters, combat planes etc)" (ibid:121). Klare (2004) justifies these distinctions by finding that non-military small arms are not sufficiently lethal and rugged to be employed in substantial military operations and major weapons require training and maintenance to use (ibid:122). Small arms have none of these liabilities and as Klare (2004) states, "it is not surprising that such munitions have become the weapons of choice for irregular forces in internal conflict situations" (ibid:122).

However, while a line can be drawn to distinguish small arms from heavy weapons, there is still no universally accepted definition of small arms (Small Arms Survey, 2003:60). Generally small arms used by insurgent groups in Southeast Asia to date, have been weapons that are carried by an individual soldier. The terrain in many of the countries forces insurgent rebels to carry only the bare necessities. For a typical insurgent soldier in Southeast Asia, their equipment will consist of a semi-automatic weapon, with a few rounds of ammunition which are used sparingly, along with knives, home made bombs or military issued grenades. A number of factors dictate this, including the ability for the rebel soldier to fight in the forest without being bogged down by gear. Furthermore, financial constraints also force soldiers to carry the bare minimum of weaponry, for fear of losing it or it being captured, or simply because there is not enough weapons and ammunition available to a large group of soldiers. While no universal

definition of small arms has been formulated, general characteristics do exist, that draw a distinct line between small and heavy weapons.

(ii) Arms transfers

Arms transfers are defined by Pearson (1994) as the “shipment of arms or related goods and services by sale, loan or gift from another country to another; such shipment may be by one country to another, by a government to specific individuals or forces (e.g. rebels), abroad, or by a manufacturer to either a foreign government or forces” (ibid:7). This study is concerned with the way in which insurgent groups in the region of Southeast Asia acquire arms, through transfers. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent ending of the Cold War, arms transfers from governments to insurgent forces have become more the exception than the rule. Instead insurgent groups are now more likely to acquire their arms from the black market, leakages in government stockpiles and battlefield acquisition such as raids and ambushes on government forces and weapons depots. Neighbouring countries who supply weapons to insurgent groups in other countries, risk the prospect of causing instability in their own country, which could have a domino effect in the rest of the region. Due to the economies of Southeast Asia countries becoming more integrated and involved in free trade with one another, governments in the region are now more concerned with the stability of neighbouring economies.

In this thesis, the definition of arms transfers needs to have a meaning that is more suited and reflective of the way insurgent groups in Southeast Asia gather weapons. Here arms transfers to insurgent groups are defined as the, “acquisition of weapons through legal or illegal channels which are used for illicit or violent purposes”. The ability of insurgent groups to acquire weapons through legal channels are virtually non-existent. Any state that is involved in active armed conflict with insurgents would never support the transfer of arms by another state to the insurgent rebellion. It is more likely that arms acquired through legal channels will involve covert methods; that is arms transferred to non-state actors by government agencies. This gives states the ability to supply weaponry to non-

state actors without breaking their export laws. Illegal channels include the black market; battlefield acquisition and purchases from government stockpiles and forces. Furthermore the definition of arms transfers to insurgent groups can be extended to take into account only small arms, light weapons and the correlating ammunition which are made readily abundant to insurgent groups by a number of suppliers in Southeast Asia.

(iii) Insurgency

For the purposes of this thesis the definition by the Uppsala Conflict Data Set has been used to define an active armed conflict¹. The threshold to define an active armed conflict has been set at 25 battle deaths per year. As Gleditsch et al (2002) states, “the lower threshold adopted here – 25 deaths in a single year is high enough for the violence to represent a politically significant event, although the precise local and international impact may vary” (ibid:617). Furthermore Gleditsch et al (2002) has defined internal armed conflict “occurring between the government of a state and internal opposition groups without intervention from other states” (ibid:619). Gleditsch et al (2002) has placed armed conflict into three different subsets. Minor Armed Conflict involves at least 25 battle-related deaths per year and fewer than 1,000 battle related deaths during the course of the conflict. Intermediate Armed Conflict involves at least 25 battle related deaths per year and an accumulated total of at least 1,000 deaths, but fewer than 1,000 in any given year. War occurs when there are at least 1,000 battle-related deaths per year (ibid:619).

The Conflict Data Set lists three countries in Southeast Asia that were affected by active armed conflicts by insurgent groups in 2002. These countries and the respective insurgent groups in conflict were as follows; Burma/Myanmar: Shan State Army (SSA) and the Karen National Union (KNU); Indonesia: Gerakan Aceh Movement (Free Aceh Movement or GAM); and the Philippines: New Peoples Army (NPA), the Moro Islamic

¹ An active armed conflict is defined by the Uppsala Conflict Data Project, “as a contested incompatibility that concerns government of territory or both where the use of armed force between two parties results in at least 25 battle-related deaths of these two parties, at least one is the government of a state” (Gleditsch et al, 2002:618)

Liberation Front (MILF), the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). The common observations that Gleditsch et al (2002) found is, internal conflict has been the dominant form of conflict throughout most of the post-World War II period (ibid:623). This is much the same case as in Southeast Asia, where more recently countries inside the region have faced a growing problem with intra-state conflict.

Fearon and Latin (2003) have defined insurgency as, “a technology of military conflict characterised by small, lightly armed bands practicing guerrilla warfare from rural base areas” (ibid:75). Furthermore, insurgency as a form of warfare can, “be harnessed to diverse political agendas, motivations and grievances (Fearon and Latin, 2003:75). While Fearon and Latin (2003) find that the concept of insurgency is most clearly associated with communism its methods, “have equally served Islamic fundamentalists, ethnic nationalists, or ‘rebels’ who focus mainly on traffic in coca or diamonds” (ibid:75). This is generally the case in Southeast Asian conflicts, where most of the conflicts centre around ethnic and territorial disputes. Insurgency is often the result of retaliation to government policies or suppression of a minority. According to Fearon and Latin (2003), “on the rebel side, insurgency is favoured by rough terrain, rebels with local knowledge of the population superior to the governments and a large population. All three of these factors aid rebels in hiding from superior government forces (ibid:76).

Insurgents while weak in military force compared to government armed forces are still able to survive and prosper, “if the government and military they oppose are relatively weak-badly financed, organisationally inept, corrupt, politically divided, and poorly informed about goings on at the local level” (Fearon and Latin, 2003:80). Key factors that favour insurgency in countries according to Fearon and Latin (2003) that relate directly to insurgent movements in Southeast Asia are whether insurgents have the support from foreign governments or Diasporas who are willing to supply weapons, money or training. Furthermore, contraband goods such as coca, opium and diamonds which can be used to finance insurgencies are important in sustaining an insurgency (ibid:81). It can be argued that external support and contraband are two of the most important sources of finance for

insurgent groups in Southeast Asia. Ganguly (2003) finds that the persistence of ethnic insurgencies in South and Southeast Asia raise two broad questions. First, most of these insurgencies have seldom been foreign based sponsored, and second, most of the ethnic insurgencies in the region are based around low-intensity wars of attrition and the, “movement’s capability to maintain durability, visibility and audibility, especially under adverse conditions” (ibid:12-13). According to Ganguly (2003) durability, “comes from insurgents’ ability to obtain material support (base, training, finances, weapons, soldiers, intelligence etc) from internal and external sources” (ibid:13).

1.4 Key Questions and Design of the Study

As previously mentioned the case studies will consist of three countries, and analyse six different insurgent groups, that are involved in active armed conflict, according to the Uppsala Data Set. Apart from these three countries, Burma, the Philippines and Indonesia having armed groups still active inside their borders, there are other advantages for choosing these countries for analysis. As Tharckabaw (2000) a member of the KNU points out, in these three countries, “we see that there’s a fairly large number of ethnic groups, which have lived more or less in isolation, for centuries, in their own areas, before colonisation of the west” (ibid). Other advantages for analysing these three countries according to Tharckabaw (2000) are, “contrary to common accusations the ethnic conflicts in these countries started without any instigation by the old colonial powers or the communists” (ibid). Tharckabaw (2000) goes on to state, “we may also view them as conflicts resulting from resistance by the lesser ethnic groups against what is now known as internal colonisation” (ibid).

Furthermore, all three countries have been listed by the Small Arms Survey 2003 as capable of producing small arms and ammunition. Small arms transfers have been analysed for this study in the context of internal conflicts and civil wars to highlight the effect small arms have on these conflicts. This takes into aspects the effects small arms have on the onset, progression, duration and intensity of internal conflicts. Currently only a handful of studies on the topic of small arms transfers in Southeast Asia are available.

Even fewer studies take into account the impact small arms transfers to insurgent groups have on internal conflict in the region. In many of the conflicts in Southeast Asia small arms have been used to initiate conflict between an insurgence force and a ruling government, which has generally resulted in violence and battle-related deaths between the two sides.

The dynamics of tracing arms supply to insurgents in Southeast Asia will need to identify the source of the arms, who are the suppliers and their particular agenda, methods and routes taken to transport the arms and the final destination of the arms. To identify these factors, the case studies have been broken up into different sections. Key aspects of these sections identify the important issues that have been understudied in the current literature. These aspects include the financing and resources insurgents are able to obtain in order to buy small arms and provide equipment in which they can wage armed conflict. Insurgent and rebel resources can then be tied into small arms transfers within the context of internal conflict and civil war literature. The current literature identifies these aspects separately but fails to tie them together within aspects of internal conflict theories in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, while studies have been done by scholars such as Sislin and Pearson (2001) who identify arms as influencing the progression of ethnic conflict by looking at variables such as duration and intensity, the case studies they have used do not include any countries from Southeast Asia.

Two aspects of small arms literature discussed in the context of internal conflicts that will be discussed in depth in this thesis will be the affects small arms have on the duration and intensity of intra-state conflict in Southeast Asia. Both these factors are important in understanding the phenomena of the detrimental effects small arms misuse by insurgent groups has on intra-state conflict in Southeast Asia. The duration of an internal conflict, is highly dependent on insurgent groups receiving arms supplies in which to wage war. Sislin and Pearson (2001) when discussing ethnic groups, find that if ethnic groups have prior access to significant arms supplies when fighting in an internal conflict, the conflict will last longer. On the other hand, ethnic groups that do not initiate violence are generally not well armed (ibid:81). Increasing arms levels argue Sislin and Pearson

(2001) take civil violence to new levels, thus enabling the combatants to modify or raise their tactics and revert to a greater show of force. A simple proposition would be to state that, “a steady arm supplier to insurgent groups in active conflict will increase the duration of an internal conflict” (ibid:81). However, this proposition depends on many variables, including the intensity at the time of the conflict and the number of external suppliers available to supply arms. Sislin and Pearson (2001) state that, “the more suppliers, the more the long –term commitment to continue backing their client; the combatant thus feels secure that resupply will be forthcoming” (ibid:90). Small arms play a significant role in internal conflict and by increasing the quantity of small arms to be made readily available, it may result in longer duration of an internal conflict.

Intensity of an internal conflict correlates with the availability of small and heavy weapons to insurgent groups. The greater the availability of heavy weapons according to Sislin and Pearson (2001) the more intense the fighting. However, small arms availability will allow insurgent groups to carry out sustained fighting. Furthermore intensity in an internal conflict argues Sislin and Pearson (2001) depends on groups being able to be supplied weapons by a foreign supply. They state that, “external supply seems to fuel the fire and to sustain groups in their struggles” (ibid:93). It is likely that if an insurgent group lacks access to heavy weapons the ability of that group to engage in intense battles will be deficient. The severity of the battle will also be lower if heavy weapons are not present. However, this can make the conflict more durable and resistant to mediation or negotiation attempts.

Other factors that are looked at in depth within this study, which provide an important insight into filling the current gap in the literature, is the ability of insurgent groups to acquire external and internal financial support. This includes looking at where insurgents get their funding and resources from and how this correlates to the purchase of small arms. This will see the investigation of rebel access to commodities (timber, gems etc) and how they use these contraband goods to sustain armed conflict with the purchase of small arms. Accessing some form of financial funding is an important factor in an insurgent group’s ability to purchase weapons from an external source. Without a form of

income an insurgent group struggles to military reequip itself to fight against a government force. This is something recognised by the ruling Burmese government the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) who initiated a programme in the 1960s known as the 'Four Cuts' aimed at stopping the flow of income to insurgent groups.

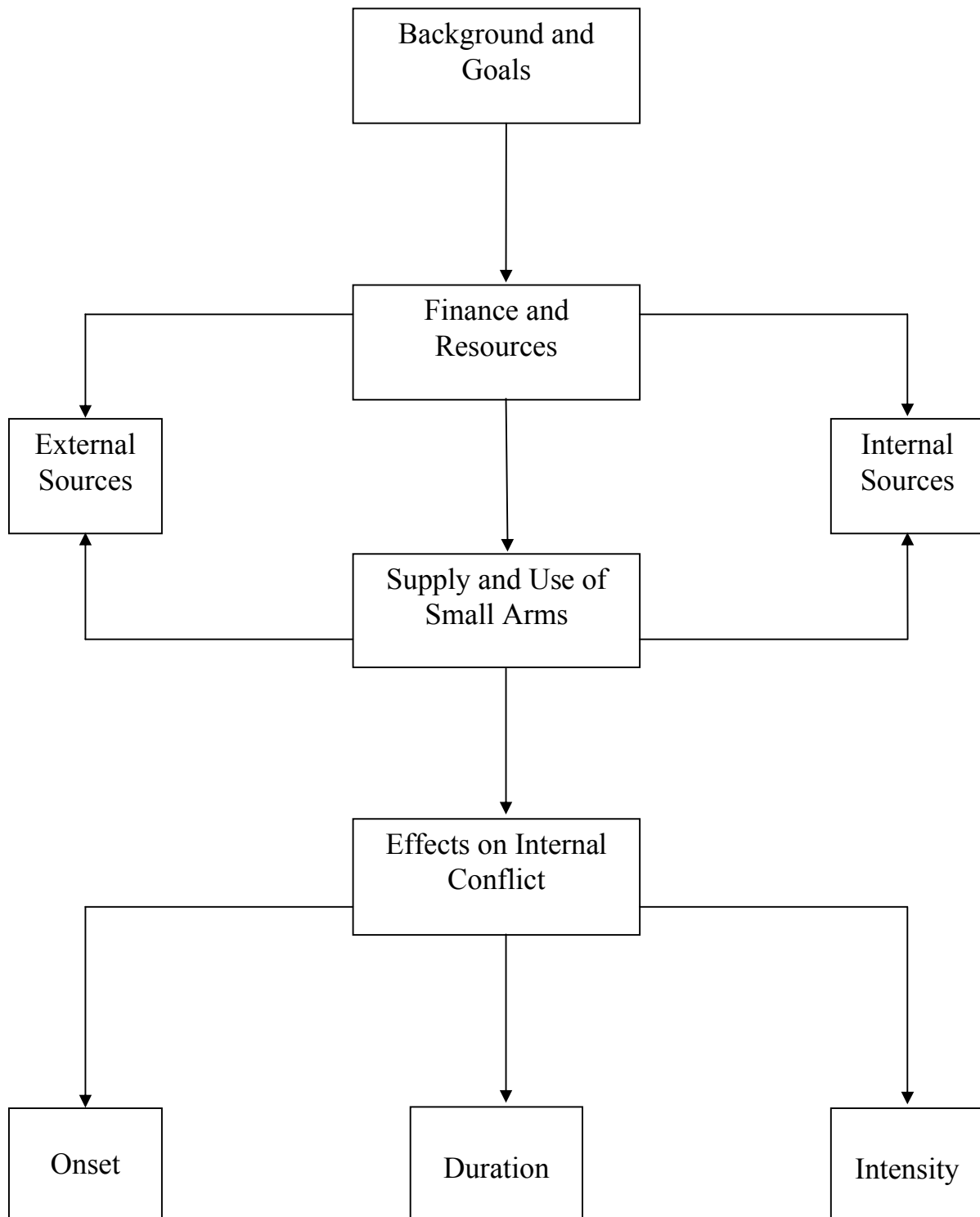
In summary, the breakdown of the analysis on the six different insurgent groups used in this thesis can be outlined in the diagram on the following page. The main goals of this thesis are to identify what external and internal sources insurgents groups are able to source both financially and military and how they use these resources to wage armed conflict and the effect it has on internal conflict in Southeast Asia, by looking at specific case studies.

A number of key questions in the context of arms transfers to insurgent groups in Southeast Asia will guide the direction of this thesis, these are:

1. What are the external and internal, financial and military sources for insurgent groups?
2. What are the most important sources of supply for obtaining small arms?
3. How does the supply, use and accumulation of small arms affect internal conflict?

The answer to these questions will involve the analysis of six different insurgent groups in three different countries in the region. This will require the examination of existing literature on arms transfers and internal conflict, while formatting any common denominators in the different case studies, then reaching a conclusion within a theoretical framework that is grounded in existing theory and research.

Figure 1.1 Breakdown of Variables Used to Analyse the Insurgent Groups



1.5 A Preview of this Thesis

(i) Thesis Structure and Chapter Outlines

This thesis is broken up into six chapters. The first chapter already discussed, looks at the effects of small arms transfers to non-state actors, using South East Asia as the region for case studies. The second chapter looks at greater depth the existing research on the effects of small arms usage within intra-state conflicts. This chapter initially outlines a framework for evaluation on small arms in intra-state conflict. From here the chapter looks at current literature and breaks the existing research and literature into two main categories; small arms and intra-state conflict. The different variables that make both these topics unique and relevant to this thesis are then discussed. The topics of small arms and intra-state conflicts are then placed in the context of Southeast Asia. This is followed by a current summary on the current literature and research already outlined in the previous part of the chapter.

From here the thesis moves into analysing the three case studies chosen in Southeast Asia; Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines and the relevant insurgent groups still operating in these countries. Key aspects and objectives in these case studies first focus on the historical background to conflict in these countries. The chapters then moves onto the analysis of the insurgents groups themselves discussing, the background and goals, finance and resources, arms transfers and the effects of arms transfers on internal conflict. The sixth and final chapter concludes the study of this thesis and the relevance of this study to the region of Southeast Asia. This chapter also summarises the key questions that had guided the direction of this thesis throughout. This thesis concludes with a brief policy analysis on possible policy recommendations for curbing the use of small arms by non-state actors in Southeast Asia.

(ii) Limitations of this Study

This thesis will not provide detailed policy recommendations to solve the problem of small arms transfers in Southeast Asia, even though the study has a brief analysis and does make a few functional and realistic policy recommendations in the final chapter. Rather this thesis outlines the main causes of insurgent rebellions in Southeast Asia and why small arms are so important in intra-state conflict. This is provided by the detailed analysis of the insurgent groups involved in current conflict throughout countries in Southeast Asia. However, this thesis may hopefully still be of help to policy makers analysing small arms transfers within the context of intra-state conflict.

A further limitation of this study involves only the certain analysis of countries and insurgent groups in Southeast Asia. Time permitting it perhaps would be better to include other countries from Southeast Asia. However, the three countries involved in this study, do represent some of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. Furthermore, there is still largely a lot of guess work involved when finding the exact amount of weapons an insurgent group in Southeast Asia may possess. However, the amount of information and data sets available in the last few years and the setting up of institutions dedicated to small arms has increased dramatically. Hopefully in the near future data sets on small arms will become as detailed as ones like SPIRI which currently only covers major conventional weapons. This will hopefully lead to further studies on all aspects of small arms use and misuse.

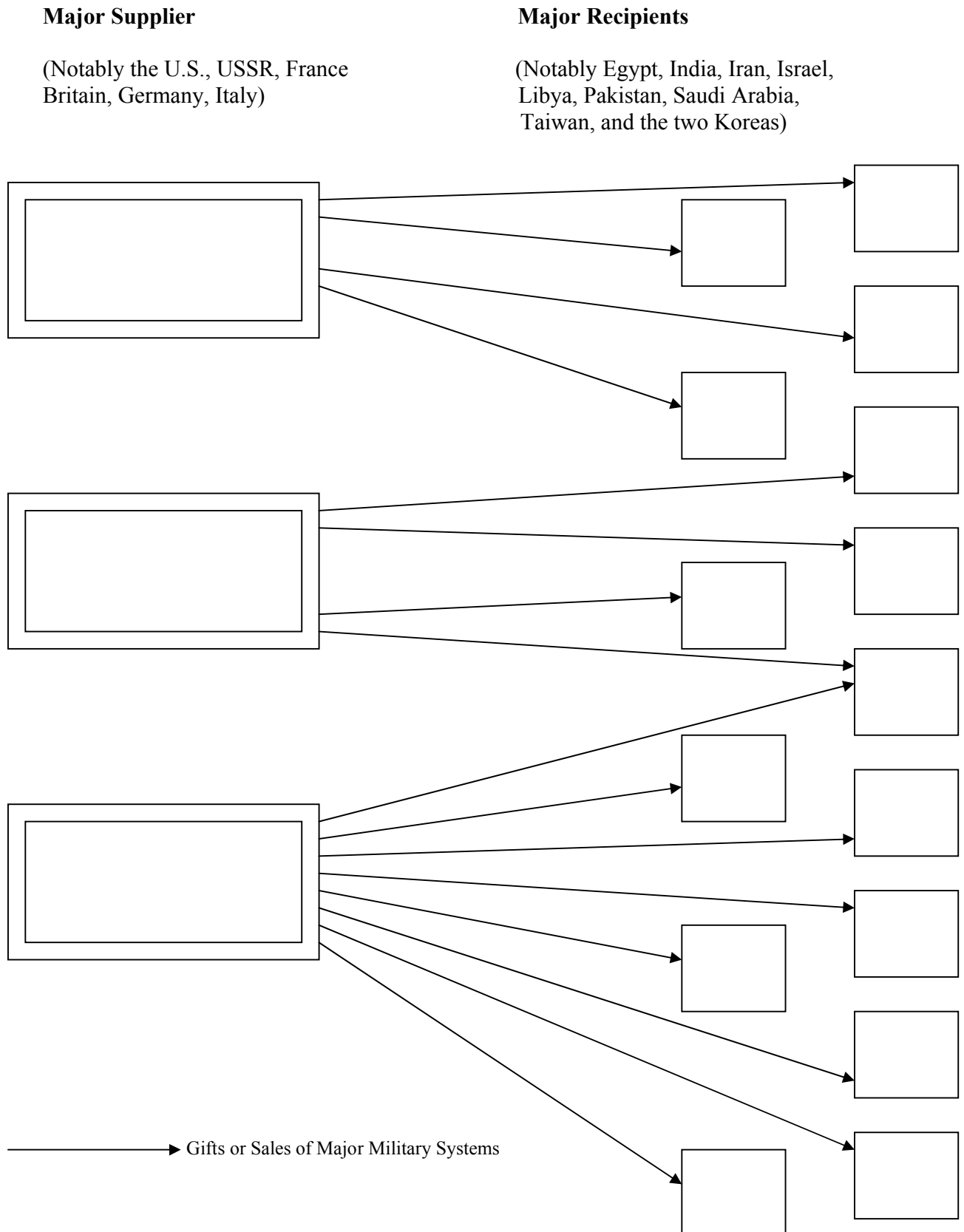
Chapter 2

EXAMINING EXISTING RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTS OF SMALL ARMS WITHIN INTRA-STATE CONFLICT

2.1 Small Arms in Intra-State Conflict: A Framework for Evaluation

The analysis of small arms transfers to insurgent groups is part of a wider base of theoretical material available on small arms and internal conflict. A framework for analysing the dynamics of arms transfers to insurgent groups as a social science question needs to be based on current research and appropriate methodologies. Therefore a framework looking at the topic of arms transfers needs to take into account subjective and objective assumptions as well as related conceptualisations and definitions. Furthermore, a framework will take into account the important variables which affect arms transfers to insurgents groups, such as the availability of weapons from an external supplier and what kind of finances an insurgent group requires in order to purchase small arms from an external supplier. A model that describes and allows for these kinds of variables has been developed by Klare (1995a).

Klare (1995a) has devised an arms transfer model that is linked to an earlier model which was termed the Proliferation/Arms Race model. Klare (1995a) has developed the Proliferation/Arms Race model further incorporating it into a new model which he has termed as the Diffusion/Global Violence model. It differs from the Proliferation/Arms Race model, as it allows for a number of new variables that affect arms transfers. The Proliferation/Arms Race model mainly focused on the transfer of arms and technologies from a handful of major industrial powers to a number of developing countries as can be seen on the following page. This is in contrast to the Diffusion/Global Violence model which looks at the distribution of arms within societies by governments, as well as taking into account the distribution of arms by insurgents, private militias and criminal organisations. The new framework created by Klare (1995a) interchanges the word

Figure 2.1: The 'Proliferation' Model

‘diffusion’ for ‘proliferation’, “because it better describes the spread of arms throughout the world and at all levels of society” (ibid:3). Klare (1995a) states that the Diffusion/Global Violence model is useful, “because...the risk of explosive violence is greatest where the diffusion of arms coincides with the fragmentation of societies along ethnic, religious, tribe, caste and linguistic lines” (ibid:3). Klare (1995a) goes on further to state “it better incorporates the wide variety of actors who play a role in this trade, and highlights the importance of small arms and light weapons in the overall world security environment” (ibid:6). This is highlighted by the model itself on the following page.

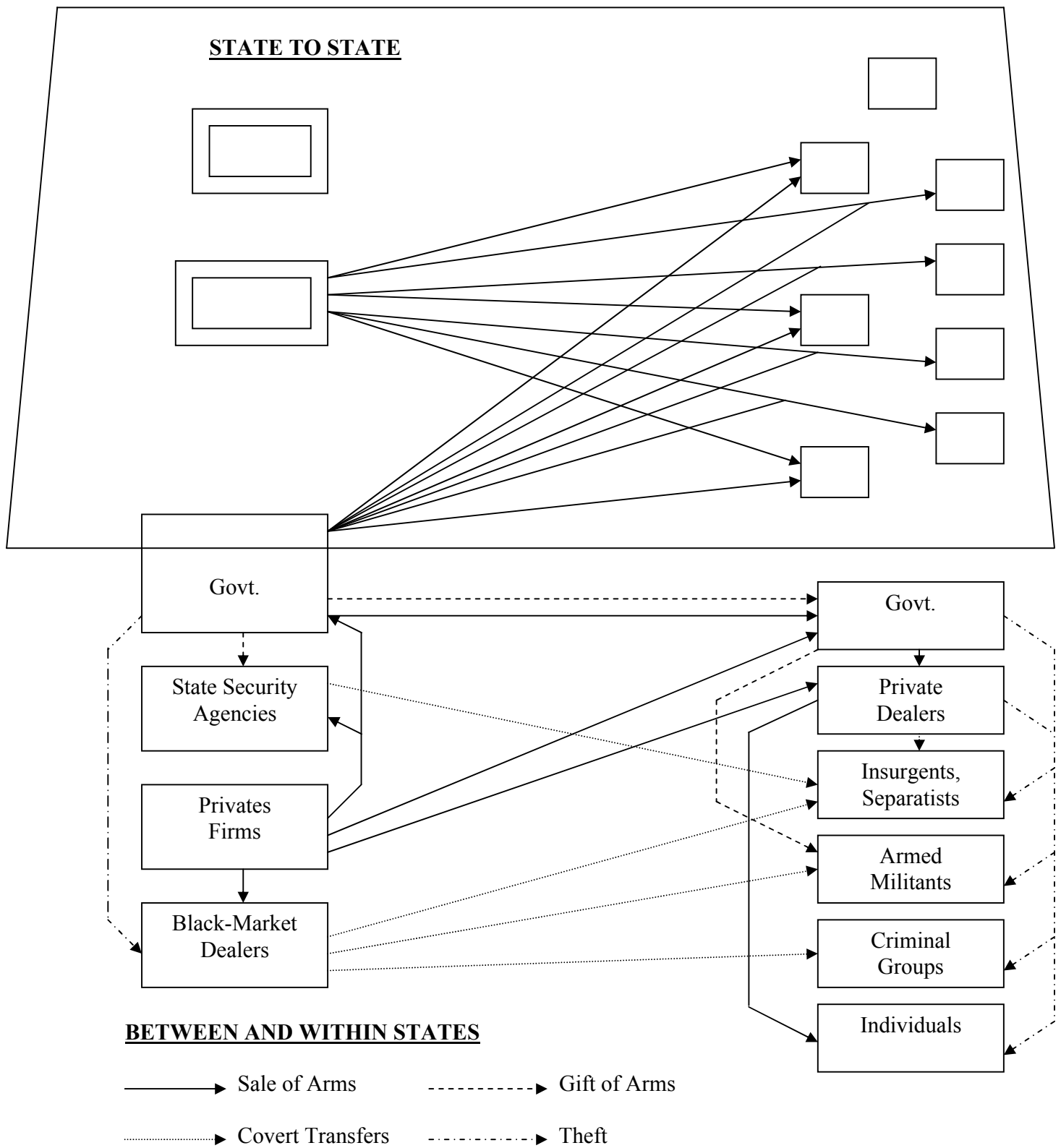
Under this model Klare (1995a) has broken down studying the trade in light weapons into two main areas. The first area consists of the ‘process of diffusion’, which looks at arms entering and penetrating states and societies, by locating the principal sources of light weapons and charting the various routes by which they arrive at their ultimate destination. As Klare (1995a) states:

“Under the diffusion model, we find that a large number of actors play a significant role in the production and distribution of weapons. These include not only governments and state-owned enterprises but also smaller and medium-sized firms, private brokers and distributors, insurgent and separatist forces and black market operators” (ibid:7).

The second area consists of the ‘propensity of armed violence in divided and fragmented societies’, which analyses the production of small arms by countries that are affected by internal conflict. Furthermore, this area looks at the impact of light weapons diffusion on particular states and societies. In Klare’s (1995a) opinion “one thing is clear: the cascade of arms is contributing everywhere to the frequency, duration and intensity of armed violence” (ibid:16-17).

The following case studies in this thesis will follow the format of Klare’s framework by looking at the role small arms play in Southeast Asia’s internal conflicts. This will focus on the different supply methods of small arms to insurgent groups as highlighted by Klare’s (1995a) model. Initially the case studies will analyse the different insurgent groups by discussing the background and goals of these groups before moving on to discuss the ability of these insurgents groups to obtain finance and resources for their

Figure 2.2: The 'Diffusion' Model



movement by looking at both external and internal sources. From here Klare's (1995) framework will be used to analyse insurgent groups small arms use and 'process of diffusion'. This will look at the principal source of weapons for that particular insurgent group, whether this is from external or internal supply and the methods used to transport these weapons. This section will also contain a list of the more popular weapons used and in possession by that particular insurgent group. From here the analysis of the insurgent groups will continue to follow Klare's (1995a) framework by discussing the use of small arms by insurgent groups on the 'propensity of armed violence' in the case studies and how this is affecting internal conflict in a particular state. This takes account into factors such as the frequency, duration and intensity of armed violence and the effects it has on internal conflict in the case studies.

2.2 Small Arms and Intra-State Conflict: Current Research and Literature

The remainder of this chapter highlights and analyses the current and existing research of small arms within internal conflict in general. More specifically, this chapter will examine in depth the current research on small arms in intra-state conflict within Southeast Asia, in particular the Philippines, Indonesia and Burma. The literature available on small arms and internal conflict come from a diverse range of fields including political science, international relations, sociology, psychology, economics and law.

The broad theoretical materials available on small arms and intra-state conflict can be broken down into smaller categories that analyse each theory separately. For instance, small arms literature includes; the analysis of small arms transfers, sources of supply and demand for small arms, definitions and characteristics, as well as the manufacture and acquisition of small arms. On the other hand, literature on intra-state conflict covers aspects such as, civil and ethnic wars and the intensity and duration of an internal conflict. The conclusion of this chapter will summarise the current literature and research on small arms and intra-state conflict in Southeast Asia, and draw attention to the current gaps in the literature. This section will also highlight how this thesis is filling in the

current gap in the extant literature and the theoretical contributions this thesis is making to address the current phenomena of small arms transfers to insurgents in Southeast Asia.

2.3 Small Arms Literature

(i) A General Overview

The focus on small arms research since the end of the Cold War has become evident with the amount of material and literature being produced by academics and researchers studying this topic. Largely this is due to the number of conflicts that are intra-state rather than inter-state based conflicts, and the fact that a leading cause of civilian casualties that occur in intra-state conflict, are from the misuse of small arms (Small Arms Survey 2003:132). Much small arms literature that has been written since the 1990's has been as a result of the reports and publications undertaken by the United Nations. In December 1995 the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on small arms, with the assistance of a panel of government experts. The foreword to this report by the Secretary General outlined the problem of small arms circulation in today's societies:

“Some of the most protracted armed conflicts in the world at present are those in which a recurring cycle of violence, an erosion of political legitimacy and a loss of economic viability deprive a State of its authority to cope with either the causes or the consequences of an excessive accumulation, proliferation and use of small arms” (1995).

The report is mainly a summary of the inadequate policies of arms control in many of the countries throughout the world, and makes the point that the accumulation and transfer of small arms is related to the increased incidence of internal conflicts. Further to this, the report also points out that small arms do not cause the conflicts in which they are used, instead the availability of the arms increases the lethality and duration of conflicts by encouraging a violent rather than a peaceful resolution of differences (ibid:10).

The General Assembly requested the Secretary General to follow up this report with another (A/54/258, August, 1999) to check the progress being made on the previous report and to take further actions and make recommendations if necessary. The 1999 report again highlighted the close relationship between arms accumulation and transfers

within internal conflict. Furthermore, the report found that the increased availability of small arms was a result of increased manufacturing:

“Among the main factors contributing to the availability of small arms and light weapons is the increase in the number of legitimate producers of such weapons combined with continuing illegitimate arms manufacturing... at the same time, a large proportion of the accumulation and flow of small arms and light weapons is constituted by recirculated weapons or arms from existing stockpiles” (ibid:8).

The most recent document the United Nations has published is the 2003 report (A/58/138, 11 July 2003) which was prepared to, “examine the feasibility of developing an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons”.

The 2003 report focused on the tracing of small arms transfers. The Report identified three key elements that would help in the tracing of small arms, these were, “marking, record-keeping and international cooperation” (ibid:12). Issues related to tracing weapons in the report, included illicitly produced small arms, which were initially manufactured legally but ended up in the illicit market. The 2003 report defines ‘illicit’ as the “production, possession, use, stockpiling, trade, brokering, transfer and reactivation of small arms and light weapons, when these activities occur in violation of the law” (ibid:15). Furthermore, the 2003 report outlines a number of routes and methods where small arms are diverted to the illicit market,

“(a) domestic leakage, through, theft, the action of corrupt Government officials of the breakdown of state control; (b) false end-user certificates or violations of end user undertakings; (c) the small-scale transfer of weapons legally acquired in one State into a neighbouring State; and (d) Government supplies to non-State actors or countries under embargo by the United Nations Security Council or under other restrictions” (ibid:14-15).

One of the leading experts in the study of small arms has been Michael T. Klare who has written numerous articles, chapters in collected work, and published and edited a number of books¹. In Klare’s (1997) article he finds that there are many reasons why small arms figure so prominently in intra-state conflicts, one such reason is that small arms require

¹ See Bibliography for a list of references.

limited resources to buy and are more accessible in the arms market. When taking into account logistical considerations, the use of small arms by insurgent groups are favoured over heavy weapons because of their simplicity to operate. Furthermore Klare (1997) finds that small arms are suitable in internal conflict as the goal of ethnic warfare, is not so much victory on the battlefield but rather intimidation by members of another group (ibid:174). Klare (1999) further expands on the advantages of small arms in intra-state conflicts. According to Klare (1999); the low cost and wide availability, lethality, simplicity and durability, portability and concealability, make small arms attractive for irregular forces in internal conflict (ibid:2). Conflicts involving small arms often persist for a long period of time and usually result in a stalemate between the various parties (Klare, 2001:1). The characteristics of small arms make them the perfect weapon for insurgent groups in Southeast Asia, and are the principal weapon of choice for use against government forces in the region.

One of the more recent articles in small arms literature has been published by Garcia (2004). Garcia (2004) highlights the importance of small arms in international security today and states, “while nuclear weapons were used once, small arms and light weapons are used everyday, everywhere, contributing to international security” (ibid:3). Garcia (2004) also finds that research and action on small arms should follow certain norms and trends. This includes looking at the different actors involved in the arms trade since the end of the Cold War and recognising that arms brokers as well as governments operate on the fringes of law. Furthermore, Garcia (2004) has found that there has been a changed matrix of conflicts from international types of dispute to civil and ethnic types of unrest (ibid:13). The small arms issue according to Garcia (2004) has issues that are multidimensional in approach and multifaceted in nature (ibid:38). Garcia (2004) like other academics and commentators highlights the importance of researching the trade in small arms, by stating that, “light weapons have historically been assumed to follow the same trade patterns as major conventional weapons. Yet this assumption has proved to be increasingly erroneous in the post-Cold War era, as small arms trafficking has augmented despite a depressed market for major weapons” (ibid:15).

(ii) Definitions and Characteristics

Small arms by their broadest definition can include everything from knives to sticks (Krause, 1998:2). However, many scholars and researchers prefer to give small arms defined boundaries and characteristics. Numerous studies often use the two terms ‘small arms’ and ‘light weapons’ interchangeably to describe weapons that do not fit into the same category as major conventional weapons. However, the United Nations have broken the two terminologies into separate categories. Small Arms refer to those weapons designed for personal use, while light weapons are designed by several persons operating as a crew (1997:11). The United Nations have categorized the following weapons into two groups where small arms include “revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, assault rifles and light machine guns” and light weapons include “heavy machine-guns, hand held under barrel and mounted grenade launchers and portable anti-craft guns etc” (2003:14). Nevertheless, both small arms and light weapons are not easily distinguishable on the battlefield with insurgent groups using whatever weapons they can find in which to wage armed conflict.

Karp (1995) places small arms into four different contexts that helps explain the different characteristics of small arms from other weapons. First, small arms can be defined by exclusion that is those weapons not listed by the major data sets such as SIPRI. Second, small arms are those weapons that can be carried by a normal infantry soldier. Third, small arms can be extended to include weapons that can be transported by pack animals and light vehicles². Finally, small arms in ethnic conflict can be defined empirically, listing all the weapons used in internecine conflict (ibid:64).

Characteristics of small arms have many defining features that distinguish them from other armaments. Rana (1995:2) list’s the characteristics that distinguish small arms from other weaponry. Accordingly they have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Weight/Portability

² Karp defines small arms and light weapons as one class of weapon.

- Explosive yield/size of the projectile
- Mode of operation
- Maintenance and logistic requirements
- Rate of fire and calibre

Furthermore Rana (1995:2-3) has broken down small arms into the following major categories based upon their performance:

- Revolvers and self loading pistols
- Sub-machine guns, assault rifles and rifles
- Machine guns
- Grenades
- Fuel air explosives
- Mines
- Anti-tank weapons
- Anti-aircraft weapons

As can be seen the characteristics of small arms revolve around their ease of operating and their ability to be carried by an individual soldier. The performance of small arms while being dangerous and lethal, are not sufficient or powerful enough to have the same impact that heavier weaponry like tanks or aircraft have in internal conflict and civil wars.

(iii) Manufacture and Acquisition of Small Arms: Sources of Supply and Demand

Rana (1995) has split the world market of small arms into four distinguishing features. First, there are a number of methods through which small arms can be acquired whether through private individuals, smuggled across borders, or obtained through skirmishes. This is in comparison to major weapons that can only be acquired through manufacture or trade. Second, small arms unlike heavy weapons can move across borders and exchange hands within countries, with relative ease. Third, most major weapons are conducted through government-to-government transactions, while the trade in small arms is mainly between private individuals or non-state actors. Finally, the trade of small arms can be a result of, “leaking, rupturing and continuing pipelines of small arms”. These pipelines

were of strategic importance in the Cold War, and still provide channels for funnelling small arms in today (ibid:6-7).

Sislin and Pearson (2001) place the available sources of arms into three broad distinctions: “domestic procurement, indigenous production, and importation” (ibid:30). Sislin and Pearson (2001) state that “domestic procurement differs from indigenous production in that in the former case, arms are present in finished form (often acquired or stolen from government armouries or on the battlefield), while in the latter, they are manufactured, modified, or remanufactured” (ibid:30). Domestic procurement requires less financial resources, and has greater certainty of delivery than importation, and is a preferable means of acquisition. Indigenous production has the advantage of not being very expensive to produce weaponry, however, production will be quite limited because of the skill required to make advanced small arms. Importation is the most costly and less reliable option; however, non-state actors may acquire arms through this method, which they may not otherwise have been able to obtain through other sources of supply (Sislin and Pearson, 2001:46-47).

There are three main channels for the supply of small weapons to non-state actors as discussed by Boutwell and Klare (1998), which are the, “Legal Channels, the Covert and Grey-Market Channels, and the Illicit Production and Black-Market Channels (ibid:3). Generally, insurgent groups do not acquire their arms through legal channels, as no external government is prepared to take the risk of supplying weaponry to these groups. Furthermore, with the increased transparency of arms transfers from the major small arms producers to their allies and clients occurring, it is increasingly harder for insurgent groups to acquire weapons through legal channels. Also with the rise of Islamic militarism and terrorism in general, external governments are increasingly reluctant to supply weapons to any non-state actors. However, there are cases of this occurring post Cold War, for instance both the two major military powers, the United States and Russia were supplying weapons to opposing forces in Angola.

Insurgent groups that rely on importation and legal channels as their main source of weaponry, face two major obstacles, their economic resources and the few suppliers that are willing to provide them with weapons (Wezeman, 2003:22). However, the reasons for governments to do so are varied. A government may seek to gain influence with a particular community, thinking of the future if that group is to come to power. Furthermore, governments may supply arms to insurgent groups, as part of an aid package to an ethnic community at risk, because of their suppression from the ruling government. On the other hand, the supply of arms from external government to insurgent groups may be the result of trying to prelude the need for military intervention, or to influence or bring about to the end a conflict (Sislin and Pearson, 2001:41).

Direct commercial sales are also a form of legal channels in which insurgents can acquire weapons. According to Klare (1995b) most smaller weapons are sold by private firms through normal commercial channels (ibid:3). Generally firms that export weapons are subject to some form of domestic or international law and are required to have licenses which allow them to export weapons. This is highlighted by Klare (1995a) who states, “once provided with a valid export licence, the supplier is usually free to transfer the goods involved through normal trade channels” (ibid:11). However, there are many loopholes in this system, such as the ability to forge export licenses and the relative ease many firms have of being able to dispense with government regulations.

Covert channels are defined as, “channels that operate with government support even though in violation of official government policy, most often by government agencies or private companies linked to such agencies” (Boutwell and Klare, 1998:3). Examples of this include United States government assistance to the Nicaraguan contra and Afghan mujahideen rebels fighting Marxist governments in the 1980s (Pearson, 1994:60). A similar channel of supply is termed the ‘grey-area’ phenomena. This channel falls in between the legal and illegal channels. Grey area phenomena can loosely be defined, “as threats to the stability of sovereign states by non-state actors and non-governmental processes and organisations” (Chalk, 1997:5). Like the covert channel of supply the grey-area channel of supply was mainly as a result of Cold War policy, and has largely ceased

to be a source of supply for non-state actors. However, these methods of arms supply according to Klare (1995a) have contributed significantly to the duration and intensity of internal violence (ibid:14). Furthermore, supply of small arms through these channels can contribute to global violence even after their initial role in internal conflicts. This occurs with the ending of violent conflict, and the subsequent lack of employment opportunities insurgents find in their new environment. Instead, insurgents may turn to banditry, drug trafficking and arms smuggling to supplement their income, often using guns acquired from foreign patrons during the earlier fighting (Klare, 1995a:14).

The illicit transfer of small arms is made up by a variety of channels. It differs from the covert and grey market channel, in the sense that the acquisition of these weapons is illegal and against domestic and most international laws. The covert and grey-market channel can consist of transfers that are approved by the exporting state without the knowledge of the state the weapons are being exported to. The illicit transfer of weapons includes 'leakage', which is generally the theft of government stocks by soldiers and the subsequent sale of these weapons to non-state actors and the black market. Klare (1995a) lists a number of methods through which the illicit transfer of small arms can occur, "through raids on government arsenals and private gun stores; through the cooperation of friendly or (corruptible) military and police officers; and through assaults on police and military patrols" (ibid:15). This channel of supply is arguably the most important method for non-state actors wishing to acquire small arms.

Klare (1995a) also notes that the transfer of illicit small arms can occur between insurgents and criminal organisations. Klare (1995a) states, "just as established governments give or sell arms to other governments, so do insurgent and criminal organisations transfer arms among themselves, whether for ideological reasons (as in the case of Marxist and Islamic fundamentalist guerrilla groups) or for profit" (ibid:16). Furthermore, while not common, insurgent groups that share similar ideological beliefs may trade weapons with each other, to prevent government forces from overwhelming or militarily defeating an insurgent force.

As far as illicit 'craft' production is concerned, information supplied to the United Nations shows that illicit production of small arms takes place in at least 25 countries (Small Arms Survey, 2003:26). Craft production can occur from more developed countries like Chile or South Africa to less developed countries like Ghana and the Solomon Islands. Many are comprised of nothing more than a nail which is attached to a spring and then to strips of a car's inner tube or to a water piping (Rana, 1995:5). However, most insurgent groups cannot manufacture their arms from scratch. According to the Small Arms Survey (2003), political factors tend to be the most important determinants of craft production (ibid:27). Demand for these illegally produced weapons can be a result of internal conflict where a non-state actor, such as an insurgent group, has limited access to an external arms supplier. Furthermore, high prices of imported small arms can also encourage the production of illicit small arms (Small Arms Survey, 2003:27).

The black market is a major source of small arms for insurgent groups. Black market deals are usually profit motivated and are conducted by private individuals or private organisations (Kantha, 1999:51). Being profit motivated transfers, insurgent groups can find a number of suppliers willing to transfer small arms. Black market transactions may also include 'secondary diffusion' characteristics, that is trafficking in weapons that were once part of a grey-market transaction somewhere else (Kantha, 1999:51). As Pearson (1994) points out most black market transactions involve small arms, "because of the difficulty of packaging and concealing major weapons transfers without some government cooperation" (ibid:60). The upsurge in black market transactions in recent years is largely a result of increasing internal conflict throughout the global system, and the activities of insurgent groups in these conflicts. Furthermore, the rise in black market arms transfers has been a result of numerous UN arms embargoes (Klare, 1995b:3). Black market transfers also involve a significant number of transactions from neighbouring states who had or were involved in internal conflict. These states usually have accumulated an excessive amount of arms, and instead of disposing of them, may sell them on to other insurgent groups involved in internal conflict. This may lead to the establishment of pipelines between suppliers and insurgent groups, recycling weapons from previous conflicts to be used in current armed conflicts.

(iii) Small Arms Transfers

The transfer of weapons from a supplier to a buyer can involve many complex procedures and transactions. Many factors have to be accounted for such as, modes of transport, drop off points and method of payments. Furthermore, there are also brokers and shippers who may organise arms transfers for weapons they do not actually own, but have arranged to sell them on the behalf of a client. Wood and Peleman (2000) comment that:

“Brokers are middlemen who organise arms transfers between two or more parties. Essentially, they bring together buyers, sellers, transporters, financiers and insurers to make a deal, especially where the players are divided by culture, politics and/or geography. They do so for financial consideration, taking a commission from the arms supplier, the arms recipient or both” (ibid:129).

For merchants to operate effectively, they need to depend upon a number of factors according to Hartung (2001), “the collaboration, acquiescence, or downright incompetence of governments, and upon the operations of a relatively open, unregulated global system of transportation and finance” (ibid:82). Merchants also benefit from the lack of transparency that occurs in most arms transfers.

Most arms transfers that incur to insurgent forces are those originating from the black market. Generally this is because most insurgent groups are excluded by law from access to the legitimate arms market (Klare, 2001:2). According to Wezeman (2003) actors involved in illegal arms transfers many include:

“Corrupt government officials, dealers who buy and sell arms, arms brokers who facilitate contacts between potential buyers and sellers of weapons and who do not own the weapons being offered for sale, and persons involved in the transport and smuggling of the weapons” (ibid:24)

These actors are purely motivated by profit, and do not take into consideration by turning a blind eye, to the consequences and harm such transfers might have. This is highlighted as a concern by the United Nations (UN) member states, who in their view believe, “poverty alleviation and economic growth are undermined by the availability and misuse of illegal small arms and light weapons” (Small Arms Survey, 2003:126).

Sislin and Pearson (2001) when discussing arms transfers to ethnic groups suggest that acquiring arms is a function of several elements, which include, “resources, availability, and delivery, plus capability and situational amenability” (ibid:44). Analysing the diffusion of arms, which looks at how small arms enter and penetrate societies by locating the source from which they have arrived has again been discussed by Sislin and Pearson (2001). When considering whom to acquire arms from, ethnic groups take into several basic considerations, including,

“Whether or not its resources are adequate; another has to do with whether arms or intervention from outside the country are likely. The availability of arms in relation to the stability and strength of the government and the likelihood of successful weapon deployment are further considerations, and the impact of having or using the weapons weighs in as well” (ibid:45)

These arguments are discussed in the table below:

Table 2.1 Opportunities and Constraints of Three Modes of Arms Acquisition

<i>Critical Factors</i>	<i>Importation</i>	<i>Domestic Procurement</i>	<i>Indigenous Production</i>
Availability	Can obtain sophisticated arms Spare parts may be an issue	Generally limited to small arms, except in cases of state breakdown Sufficient quality may be an issue	Generally limited to small arms Sufficient quantity may be an issue
Resources Required	High, but money can be raised from foreign contributions or local resources	Low	Low
Shipment Safety	Arms may be seized prior to delivery	Generally not salient; storage considerations	Generally not salient; storage considerations

-Sislin and Pearson (2001:45)

According to Sislin and Pearson (2001) it is possible to make two general assumptions about ethnic group’s arm-seeking behaviour. First, ethnic groups have preferences for their sources of arms, and secondly, leaders of these groups will try and maximise the value of any arms transfers. Ethnic groups will also spend fewer resources on arms than more, while choosing safer acquisition methods over more risky ones (ibid:46). However, ethnic groups like other non-state actors have to weigh up the advantages and

disadvantages of the various methods of small arms supply and whether to use various arms suppliers, when they are involved in active armed conflict.

2.4 Intra-State Conflict Literature

(i) A General Overview

Since the end of the Cold War, the focus on conflict has shifted from inter-state to intra-state, as a majority of conflicts that now occur are intra-state rather than inter-state. For most governments, especially those in the developing world, protecting their internal borders, rather than their maritime borders, has become their number one defence priority. With the increased threat of civil war breaking out, it is not financially feasible for developing countries to stockpile weapons in the possibility that they will be attacked by another country. Instead, the threat perception of most developing countries since the end of the Cold War is the danger of an internal conflict turning into a full blown civil war. The Human Security Report records that in 2002 there was only one inter-state conflict (between India-Pakistan) while there were 31 civil wars involving at least one rebel group, and 35 internal conflict that involved only non-state actors (Capie, 2004:3)

Rana (1995) makes the comment that “where the military more powerful combatant still has the same chance of ending the war through victory, this is unlikely in most intra-state conflicts” (ibid:8). Indeed, most intra-state conflicts in developing countries will often stagnate because neither side is military powerful enough to defeat the other. Rana (1995) has placed armed conflicts within the political context into four categories. First, there are the random acts of violence by unlawful individuals. Second, there are sporadic incidences of violence, by different groups seeking greater cultural and economic benefits from the state. Third, sporadic incidence of violence can occur by a group’s intent on removing the current sovereignty of a state. Finally, intense acts of violence can occur, with the breakdown of the state and all its territories (ibid:8).

Intra-state wars are different from inter-state wars for a number of reasons according to Rana (1995). Intra-state conflicts tend to have a domino effect and spread across other countries in the region, while inter-state are more prone to outside involvement. Furthermore, intra-state conflicts are prone to fragmentation, where a lot of the effects are irreversible (ibid:9). Intra-state conflicts are also a result of weak states. Characteristics of a weak state include, institutional structures which are underdeveloped and high poverty rates with a slow economy. Rana (1995) makes the comment that “the absence of recognised avenues for redressing the discontent arising from these weaknesses leads to breakdowns of law and order, to secessionist movements, to outright civil war” (ibid:10). Hence most underdeveloped or third world countries will be prone to some form of internal conflict.

(ii) Insurgents involved in Intra-State Conflict

Insurgent groups are made up from a variety of different actors, structures and goals. One group involved in internal conflict, might have the goal of gaining autonomy over a particular part of a region within the state, while another group may have the goal of completely taking over the country or creating a new government. Some groups may even just wish for a greater share and allocation of budget resources from a government. On the other hand, a insurgent group may just be fighting for purely financial reasons, as their standard of living is better off than what it would be participating in a states economy. Furthermore, some insurgent groups have more financial resources than other and are better equipped to wage civil war. Largely an insurgent group’s resources and structural system will depend on the strategic environment they are placed in. Most insurgent groups are fighting in the context of political violence, where they are struggling to overthrow the government or trying to achieve autonomy.

The finance an insurgent group receives when it is involved in internal conflict is critical in allowing these groups to carry out armed conflict. This is highlighted by Klare (2004) who states, “whatever the original motivation for the establishment of a particular paramilitary organisation, it must find some way of generating operating funds”

(ibid:120). Klare (2004) finds that when insurgent groups try and finance the acquisition of arms and other military commodities, “they morph into predatory organisations” (ibid:120). This can cause further problems in the conflict cycle as the leaders of these groups may become contaminated by the opportunities for personal enrichment, “so will both seek to increase their illicit gains and to resist efforts by outside parties to mediate or terminate the conflict” (Klare, 2004:121).

Insurgent groups within internal conflict have a particularly large impact on the arms trade, especially arms acquired through illicit channels. According to Capie (2004) there are three reasons why non-state actors warrant particular attention in the context of the small arms agenda. First, non-state actors are important participants in the trade in small arms and ammunition. Second, in internal conflict they are important military and political actors. Third, the international community has cracked down on the use of small arms use by non-state actors, largely due to the work achieved by human rights organisations.

(iii) Intensity of Warfare in Intra-State Conflicts

The intensity of fighting in internal conflicts is often the result of each side being able to receive a sufficient supply of armaments in which to carry out warfare. For governments in a weak state receiving arms supplies from external actors or governments is vital for defeating an insurgent group. Likewise, an insurgent group that has sufficient arms supplies from one particular source or a variety of sources will be able to carry out intensive fighting for longer periods. As Sislin and Pearson (2001) state, “in the recent literature on internal wars, it is apparent that arms are a factor in the opportunity for ethnic groups and governments to use violence as a form of political expression, and in their willingness to do so” (ibid:63).

Intensity is measured as casualties divided by time (Sislin and Pearson, 2001:93). It has generally been presumed that conflicts involving heavy weapons will be more intense. However, as seen by conflicts in East Timor and Rwanda, this is not necessarily always

the case. Groups that are involved in intense struggles are usually those with some form of external support. As Sislin and Pearson (2001) state, “external supply seems to fuel the fire and to sustain groups in their struggles” (ibid:93).

Ammunition is also crucial to the ability of an insurgent group to carry out armed conflict. Without ammunition, weapons are useless by themselves. Most automatic rifles like the AK47 use a lot of ammunition in short bursts. However, the area of ammunition is often overlooked by researchers and academics when studying the area of small arms. The intensity and duration of internal conflict is often dependent on how much ammunition an insurgent group has at their disposal. Without a constant supply of ammunition it is often impossible for insurgent groups to engage in battles with government forces for any length of period. However, if this source of supply for ammunition is forthcoming, a general proposition would be to expect that this would increase the intensity as well as duration in internal conflict.

(iv) Duration of Warfare in Intra-State Conflict

The duration of internal conflict is highly dependent on arm supplies to either side at the time the conflict is occurring. The greater the arms supply (especially to a non-state actor) it is more likely that an internal conflict will be drawn out. This is highlighted by Sislin and Pearson (2001) who state, “the essential assumption about arms and duration is that increases in armament provide greater opportunity for actors already willing to fight, and that changes in arms to one actor alter the willingness of the other actor” (ibid:89). Furthermore, Sislin and Pearson (2001) find that there are three conditions that will favour longer domestic war, this being; increased quantity of arms available, increased number of suppliers and deployment of heavy weapons. Sislin and Pearson (2001) find that heavy weapons are more associated with shorter conflicts, while light weapons tend to be involved in longer wars (ibid:91). This is largely a result of the inability of either side to win the conflict, because of the restrictive damage that small arms and light weapons can do. Furthermore, argue Sislin and Pearson (2001) the greater the number of external arms suppliers, the longer the war, as suppliers have a “long-term commitment

to continue backing their client, the combatant thus feels secure that resupply will be forthcoming” (ibid:90).

When an internal conflict breaks out into civil war, the duration of the civil war is largely dependent on whether each side can disarm each other. According to Fearon (2002) “a quarter of the 122 civil wars starting since 1945 lasted two years or less, and a quarter of all civil wars have lasted at least 15 years” (ibid:2). Fearon (2002) has found that there are two main causes for long running civil wars. First there are ‘peripheral insurgencies’ which is described as civil wars involving rural guerrilla bands operating near the states borders, which have been remarkably difficult to end (ibid:3). This is because peripheral insurgencies involve ‘sons of the soil’ dynamics which involve land or resource conflicts. The second case relates to, the ability for a rebel group to have readily access to funds through contraband such as opium, diamonds or coca, which will effect the duration of a civil war (ibid:3).

Other factors according to Fearon (2002) which effect the duration of internal conflicts and civil wars includes ethnic heterogeneity, per capita income, population, ethnic and secessionist wars and overall costs associated with the conflict. Ethnic diversity is usually associated with longer wars and sons of the soil cases. Per capita income is negatively associated with civil war duration but is statistically insignificant. Ethnic wars also last longer in a civil conflict. Finally, costs (lethality) are related to civil war duration when the conflict can be conducted at a fairly low cost (ibid:15-19). The longer the duration in a civil war according to Fearon (2002) is also a result of both sides in the conflict developing strategic data on each sides capabilities, tactics and resolve (ibid:22).

2.5 Small Arms and Intra-State Conflicts within Southeast Asia

The use of small arms within internal conflict in Southeast Asia is caused by a number of factors. Most insurgent groups in the region are highly dependent on the supply of small arms, as they have no access to major weapons. Bedeski et al (1998) lists a number of reasons why the illicit trade in small arms within Southeast Asia has flourished. First,

inadequate controls and checks at borders, due to incompetence and corruption allow steady flows of arms into the region. Second, infeasible costs and technological difficulties make implementing effective controls difficult. Third, lack of coordination and cooperation among regional states has been prominent. Finally, the lack of international law on what constitutes illicit arms transfers has increased the illegal arms trade (ibid:5).

Following this Capie (2002) lists four factors that shape the illicit arms transfers in Southeast Asia,

“First the large number of intra-state conflicts in the region and the concomitant need for illegally sourced weapons among non-state actors. Second, the region is home to several post-conflict states where large numbers of military small arms and light weapons can be easily obtained. Third, Southeast Asia’s long maritime and continental frontiers are extremely difficult to monitor and police. The fourth and related point is that the region is home to a significant number of ‘weak states’ (ibid:15).

Another factor to take into consideration also, is legal controls on privately licensed firearms, which also contributes to small arms proliferation in the Southeast Asian region (Kramer, 2001:7). For instance the Philippines has no general requirements to be met prior to the application process, except the applicant must be over 21 (ibid:7). The main problem the countries face in Southeast Asia is that there are no universal legal control on arms production and transfers in the region.

According to Capie (2002) most small arms used in internal conflict in Southeast Asia are recycled weapons from former conflicts (ibid:17). In most of the literature available on arms trafficking in Southeast Asia, Thailand is considered one of the most important, if not the most important centre for arms trafficking in Southeast Asia. Two reasons for this are, Thailand’s central location in the region and the previous role Thailand has played in supplying weapons to other conflicts in the region. (Kramer, 2001:1). This is especially the case in conflicts like Indonesia and the Philippines. Thailand’s policy of creating ‘buffer zones’ against neighbouring countries that were perceived as a threat, has led to the supply of weapons to Burma, to be used in the conflict with Cambodia (Kramer, 2004). However, when the Cambodian conflict came to an end, arms formerly in the

Khmer Rouge stockpiles began making their way from Cambodia back to Thailand to be sold on the black market (Kramer, 2004). This highlights the importance of recycled weapons being used in more than one conflict in Southeast Asia.

Chalk (2001) lists a number of countries that supply arms to non-state actors in Southeast Asia. According to Chalk (2001) Cambodia represents probably the most important source for illicit arms (ibid:3). This has mainly been due to the stockpiles of weapons that had been built up during conflict throughout the 1980s, and recycled into other conflicts in the region. Chalk (2001) states, “Thailand acts as the main transit area for light arms from Cambodia, with maybe as many as 80% of all illegal consignments passing through the country” (ibid:4). Further sources of supply from outside the region, but within close proximity include, Pakistan, China and North Korea. Most of these weapons pass through Thailand on their way to supplying non-state actors in the Southeast Asian region. Chalk states that, “in Thailand, a study conducted by Chulalongkorn University in 1997 put the country’s illegal economy at Bt400 billion (US \$9.4 billion) – equivalent to 10% of the national economy, a significant proportion of which was generated through the underground weapons trade” (ibid:8).

The Small Arms Survey (2003) estimates the global production of small arms and ammunition to be around US\$7.4 billion (ibid:4). The Survey (2003) also estimates that 98 countries have the capacity to produce small arms. The Asia-Pacific region has an estimated 20 countries with the ability to produce small arms, which constitutes 21% of the number of countries able to produce arms worldwide (ibid:11). All the case studies in this thesis; the Philippines, Burma and Indonesia are all listed by the Small Arms Survey (2003) as being able to produce and manufacture both small arms and ammunition. However, they are not considered major or medium producers of small arms or ammunition in the Asia-Pacific region. The amount of firms and states capable of producing small arms in the Asia-Pacific region has increased from 23 and 14 in the 1980s to 31 and 14 in the 1990s respectively (Abel, 2000:83). While the increase from 23 to 31 in the number of companies producing small arms in the region is reasonably modest, it is likely as a result of sources citing China North Industries and Chinese State Arsenal as their main suppliers, while other sources cite 16 arms producing factories

there (Abel, 2000:84). In total the value of the military hardware used by sub-state armed groups worldwide has been as high as US\$3.5 billion in recent years, nearly a quarter of the orthodox trade in major weapons in 1992 (Chalk, 1997:12).

Having vast areas of territories to cover allows for a lot of illicit arms transfers to occur in many Southeast Asian states, especially the Philippines and Indonesia. The assistant secretary of Malaysia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nafisah Mohamed has passed the comment that, "the most difficult and challenging part is the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons by sea" (Dursin, 2001:3). Many of the states in the region are still recovering from the economic crisis that had occurred in the late 1990s. States like Indonesia which are still struggling to cope with the democratisation process, have little money to spend due to a poor economy and crippling fighting with insurgent groups in the resource abundant Aceh region. This has given easier access to arms smugglers for offloading arm shipments in unpatrolled parts of states territories. Furthermore, the large amount of goods that pass through various Southeast Asian ports is largely unchecked, plus many of the people working in customs are prone to corruption or open to bribery.

2.6 Summary on the Current State of the Literature and Research Methodologies

Annual studies published like the Small Arms Survey are beginning to highlight the effects small arms misuse can have on internal conflict throughout many regions in the world. This has led to the increase in research on small arms proliferation and the effects it can have on civilians with the misuse of these weapons by groups like non-state actors, criminal organisations and drug syndicates. A more in-depth understanding on the effects small arms can have on intra-state conflict is becoming more apparent in the current literature and recent studies. This is largely a result of many governments in developing countries throughout the world identifying the determinant effects small arm misuse can have on national security. For many of these countries the dominant security threat in the past had been the possibly of nuclear weapons finding their way into the hands of neighbouring states. However, with the rise of intra-state conflicts in the last twenty years many developing nations are finding that their primary security threat is coming from internal factors, such as the rise of insurgent groups. While much of the current literature

and discussions in various forums has been made of the problem of small arms proliferation, mention is made rarely of Southeast Asia. According to Kramer (2001) this is a result of most ASEAN states national positions on small arms proliferation being reactive rather than proactive. Kramer (2001) goes on to state, “there have been few resources committed to analysing the small arms situation within ASEAN” (ibid:2).

Much of the current literature on small arms has been published since the end of the Cold War. Many studies by the United Nations and experts in the field such as Michael T. Klare have promoted future research in the subject and have instigated further research into the topic of small arms. However, while small arms literature is growing, it has only recently been thrust into the limelight, meaning that for researchers and policy makers alike there is still need for research findings for policy formulation and evaluation. Most of the literature on small arms that exist in Southeast Asia has only recently been developed. Bits and pieces in chapters existed discussing small arms within internal conflict in Southeast Asia, but no study existed focusing solely on small arms within Southeast Asia. Capie (2002) doctorate thesis has been the first major study focusing solely on small arms production and transfers in Southeast Asia. This provides the reader with a good overview on the topic of small arms in Southeast Asia.

There are numerous gaps in the literature that this thesis will attempt to highlight and fill in the remaining chapters. First, this thesis in the following case studies will point out the relevant effects small arms have on the security of Southeast Asian nations and the growing use of these weapons in internal conflict. This will be shown by developing the correlation between insurgent movements and the increasing use of small arms by these groups within internal conflicts. This involves identifying a number of factors involving insurgent movements such as, finance, ability to acquire small arms and the threat small arms possess on national security. Overall this thesis will provide a more in-depth study of individual insurgent groups who were recently or still are currently involved within internal conflict in Southeast Asia and hence need some form of arms supply to continue fighting government forces.

Many current theories fail to address the phenomena of small arms transfers because why studies exist that look solely at one particular insurgent group (for instance GAM) no particular study solely analyses these insurgent groups and their supply and access to small arms. Furthermore, there is a lack of studies in the current literature that ties rebel finance with the connection of small arms transfers within Southeast Asia. By focusing on the external and internal supply of this connection it makes it easier to trace where the main supply of small arms is coming from. This also helps develop the theoretical contribution of this thesis by further developing intra-state conflict theory by highlighting the effects small arms transfers to insurgents groups have on the intensity and duration of internal conflicts within Southeast Asia. It also develops and highlights the link between rebel finance and small arms. By following this line of theory this thesis will be able to create a framework for evaluation on the effects of small arms in internal conflict by focusing more in-depth on one region, which will clearly outline what support military or financially the insurgents receive. For most internal conflicts small arms have been the principal instrument of violence and it is the job of researchers and academics to inform policy makers of the best way in which to deal with these problems and the real threat that small arms possess to international security.

Chapter 3

BURMA/MYANMAR

3.1 The Historical Background to Conflict in Burma

Burma has one of the most ethnically diverse populations in Southeast Asia. This associated with a ruling military regime who have a history of suppressing ethnic minorities has given many insurgent groups in the country reason to continue fighting. There are numerous ethnic groups in Burma including Mon, Shan, Rakhaing (Arakanese), Burman, Karen, Karenni, Chin, Kachin, Palaung, Pa-O, Kayang, Wa and Lahu (Htoo, 2000:36-37). Despite the numerous ethnic groups who inhabit Burma, the Burmese government has been unwilling to take into consideration the contrasting ethnic culture that exists in many of the states. Peace agreements have been signed with various opposition and insurgent groups in the past, but many of these agreements have been centred on economic concessions, rather than dealing with ethnic civil liberties. Instead many of these ethnic groups have been subjected to human rights violations and suppression of their religious and cultural beliefs by the Burmese government. This is despite Burma's 1948 constitution adopted after independence from the United Kingdom which "recognised the special position of Buddhism as the country's major religion, but granted freedom of faith and worship...to all persons" (Maung, 1959 cited in Selth, 2003:3). Clearly the liberties granted to ethnic minorities in Burma for the freedom and faith to worship has not occurred, especially since the overthrow of the democratic regime in 1962 by the military under the leadership of General Ne Win. Ne Win opposed a power-sharing arrangement between the minority states and the Burma majority areas. This has made Burma prone to insurgent rebellions, in a country run by a military backed government, where freedom of speech has become a criminal act. These groups involved in the rebellion have chosen instead to "challenge the validity of an independent nation state whose definition they did not fit" (Thomson, 1995:273). This has seen thousands,

possibly tens of thousands of people killed in conflict in Burma, along with the 2 million people that have been displaced by continuous fighting (Project Ploughshares, 2003)¹.

Burma's population is made up of a majority of Theravada Buddhists which according to Burmese government statistics accounts for 90% of the 50 million people (Selth, 2003:3). However, even if this figure is likely to be inflated by the Burmese government as suspected, the proportion of Buddhists in Burma would be at least 80% (Smith, 1991 cited in Selth, 2003:3). The minority of the population is made up of Christians and Muslim who are estimated to represent about four percent each, followed by Hindu and Chinese inhabitants (Selth, 2003:3&5). The ethnic groups that make up this minority such as the Shans and Karens have been included as one entity and have been grouped into one culture, this being the dominant Theravada Buddhist (Thomson, 1995:272). This has led to resentment by minority groups like the Shans and Karens, who believe that the Burma government has no plans of making the country a democratic nation, which would take into consideration minority rights and views. With the 1974 Constitution dissolving the two previous sections, Burma proper and the ethnic states created by the previous constitution, "armed struggle of the ethnic organisations consequently gained momentum between 1974 and 1988" (Htoo, 2000:43). The 1974 constitution divided Burma into seven ethnic states, "largely inhabited by non-Burman people, and seven geographical divisions largely inhabited by the majority Burman people (Htoo, 2000:43). However, this gave greater control to insurgent armies in states like the Shan and Karen, who now enjoy greater support and sympathy for their movements.

Insurgent rebellions have been a major problem for the Burmese government since the country's initial independence. A year after independence Burma faced two contrasting types of rebellion, one from the communist uprising and the other from a series of separatist revolts by ethnic minorities (Tan, 2000:72). Twelve main ethnic groups have been involved in ethnic revolts, but the ones that have been running the longest and are still involved in active armed conflict come from the Shan and Karen states. At the beginning of Burma independence, the Karen nation was the best organised minority

¹ There were 3,000 casualties alone during civil protests in 1988

group (Fredholm, 1993:99). According to Thomson (1995) the Karen uprising is the oldest continuous, ethnic revolt in the world (ibid:274). The Karen are also one of the largest ethnic groups who have failed to gain recognition as an independent nation-state in mainland South-East Asia (Smith, 1994:42). Estimates of the population of the Karen vary, from anthropologists who estimate the Karen population in Burma to be around four million. By contrast the Karen National Union (KNU) “claims there are over seven million Karen whereas the ruling Burmese government the State, Peace and Development Council (SPDC)² calculates that there are just over 2.5 million” (Smith, 1994:42). The KNU have been the most significant of the ethnic insurgent groups in Burma however, a majority of their power evaporated in January 1995, when their headquarters at Manerplaw was captured by the Burmese armed forces (the Tatmadaw). Subsequent defeats at the hands of the Tatmadaw, left the group without a base of operations, and instead the group have now had to rely on guerrilla tactics to combat the Tatmadaw. Like the Karen State, the Shan State has had numerous ethnic militia and insurgent groups operating within its border. According to Fredholm (1993) “in the 1960s the total armed strength of the various Shan factions was estimated to be at most 8,000” (ibid:158). The main insurgent group in the Shan State has been the Shan State Army (SSA) but their power like the KNU’s has evaporated over time. However, they still remain the largest and best organised insurgent force in the Shan State.

3.2 The Growing Use of Commodities and Contraband in Burma to Fund Conflict

Since 2001 Burma has surpassed Afghanistan as the largest opium and heroin producer in the world (DEA, 2002:1). Burma is part of the Southeast Asian heroin and opium producing region, along with Laos and Thailand, known as the Golden Triangle. Many of the insurgent groups still operating in Burma are involved in the drug production and trafficking trade. For many of these groups, this constitutes their primary source of income, which can be used to fund their rebellion and purchase small arms. Not only have insurgent groups been involved in the trade in opium, but so have government forces who have taken advantage of state weakness and the exploitation of natural

² The State Peace and Development Council succeeded the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) in November 1997 as the ruling Burma government.

resources and other commodities (Sherman, 2003:226) While undermining insurgent's group's access to the drugs trade and the subsequent income they derive from it, the Burmese government has been able to take a greater share of the lucrative drug market. Groups like the United Wa State Army (UWSA) have been known to use money from drug trafficking to finance the purchase of weapons³. Money from illegal logging has also been a major source of revenue for many insurgent groups in Burma. This practice tends to occur in areas where insurgent armies have signed cease-fires with the SPDC (Brunner et al, 1998:18).

The supply of these weapons comes from the black market in Cambodia, where they can be shipped through Thailand by gun smugglers. Weapons available for purchase include M-16s, Chinese made AK47s, M79 grenade launchers, RPG rockets mortars, hand grenades and Surface to Air Missiles. An M-16 assault rifle can be delivered to Burmese insurgents at the Thai-Burmese border for between 4,500-8,000 baht, depending on its condition (BurmaNetNews, 1994). As well as Cambodian supply, weapons may also be purchased in Southern Mizoram (<http://acd.iss.org>). The Indian Navy have also cut off illegal arms shipments that are passing through the Andamans and Nicobar Islands that have been bound for Burma insurgents. Furthermore, there has been reported interest by Burmese insurgents in purchasing arms from Afghanistan, due to the large number of surplus Soviet and United States weapons still available (BurmaNetNews, 1994). The Tatmadaw for a number of years had been outgunned by insurgent forces who had better weapons like the Chinese Ak47s and American weapons such as the M16s, M70s, mortars and rocket launchers (Smith, 1991:100). However, few of Burma's insurgent groups have been well armed, and none have seriously threatened the ruling SPDC (Selth, 2003:16).

With the creation of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) in September 1988 there was an upsurge of fighting in the countryside by ethnic, ideological and narcotics-based insurgent groups. With Burma's government in political turmoil

³ The UWSA is believed to have a 16,000 strong army and is currently an ally to the Burmese government. The SSA are military engaged with the forces of the UWSA as well as the Tatmadaw. In return the SPDC allow the UWSA to continue with their drug trade, which has made the UWSA one of the largest drug-trafficking organisations in Southeast Asia (Marshall, 2005).

there was potential for insurgent groups to cash in on the lucrative drug trade. Other lucrative forms of trade in Burma include those “involving jade, timber, opium, luxury and other black market goods, but over the years antiques, cattle and other agricultural produce have also been illegally exported in huge quantities abroad” (Smith, 1997:106). Many insurgent groups that still operate in Burma deal in these and other commodities and contraband goods. Unofficial World Bank estimates place 40 percent of Burma’s annual Gross National Product by trade on the black market, by early 1988 (Smith, 1994:97). The ability of insurgent groups to control this trade generally reflects the strength of their armed force. This is highlighted by Smith (1991) who states, “most are extremely adept at protecting and controlling their own trade routes” (ibid:99).

3.3 The Karen National Union (KNU)

(i) Background and Goals

The KNU was formed in February 1947 from a merger of existing Karen parties and in June 1947 declared to the world the formation of the Karen Free State of ‘Kawthoolei’ (Smith, 1994:44). The KNU was created and led by Christian Karen and remained open to all Karens regardless of religion like its predecessor the Karen National Association (KNA) (Fredholm, 1993:27)⁴. The Karen believes that they have the right to autonomy and independence from the Burmese government. This claim has been based around arguments that the initial colonial powers in Burma should have recognised the Karen nation as a separate state. Instead it was grouped as part of Burma (Thomson, 1995:282). These claims have clearly been outlined in the goals set out by the KNU after one of their congress held at Maw Ko, Nyaunglebin district in June and July 1956. According to the website of the KNU⁵ the political aims of the group were laid down in this congress and they still apply today. These goals include the establishment of a Karen State with the right to self-determination, the establishment of national states for all nationalities and the establishment of a genuine federal union. The KNU will also pursue the policy of national democracy. The Karen people have been fighting for an independent state since

⁴ The KNU underwent a brief name change to the Karen National United Front (KNUF), but changed its name back to the KNU when its chairman Mahn Ba Zan was replaced by Bo Mya (Becka, 1995:111).

⁵ See www.karen.org

January 1949 when the government outlawed the KNU which resulted in Karen personal defecting from the Burmese army. Up until this point there had been no full-scale conflict between the two sides until the formation of the KNU in 1947, despite the Karen having called for an independent Karen state since the 1930s (Global Witness, 2003:71).

The KNU despite suffering serious military set-backs in the last few years is still believed to be the largest insurgent force still involved in armed conflict in Burma⁶. Estimates of their strength vary, but they are currently believed to have a combined strength with scattered units of pro-democracy students of 3000 to 4000 troops (Pederson et al, 2000:170). This is a far cry from an estimate of a one time high of 10,000 troops under arms, still commanded by veterans of the British Army (Smith, 1994:45). The initial headquarters of the KNU were based in Mannerplaw from 1974 to 1995. However, SLORC offensives leading to the fall of the Mannerplaw base, plus the formation of a breakaway group the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) severely weakened the KNU. Factions between the Buddhist and Christian members in the KNU had led to the internal division within the group. It is believed that the split may have been engineered by the SLORC, as DKBA support was instrumental in the downfall of the Mannerplaw and Kawmoorah headquarters (Global Witness, 2003:72). Further offences by the Burma military in 1997 basically crushed the remaining Karen rebels, who were driven out of their bases in the eastern mountain ranges (Tan, 2000:75). This prevented the KNU from defending fixed positions and instead the group have had to rely on guerrilla tactics (Global Witness, 2003:71). Lintner (1991) writing before the SLORC military offensives claims the “Karen rebel area measured about 5-6000 square kilometres and formed a 400 kilometre long narrow border strip from the area opposite Mae Sariang in Thailand to the north to the Mawdaung Pass near Prachuap Khiri Khan in the South” (ibid:18). It is unlikely the KNU control this much territory in the Karen state currently, or are unable to defend any fixed position in the Karen State.

However, the KNU continue to militarily engage the Burmese army, despite having occurred major setbacks. A reason for this is the KNU has maintained substantial

⁶ The KNU formally inaugurated the Karen National Defence Organisation (KNDO) in July 1947, which became the KNU's military arm (Becka, 1995:110). This in turn has become the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) which is currently the KNU's military arm (Capie, 2002:63).

infrastructure and government organisations of their own (Smith, 1997:105). The KNU have still not signed any cease-fire agreements with the SPDC but according to Zaw (2002), the “KNU have engaged in serious dialogue aimed at achieving peace in Karen State, but these have stalled over Rangoon’s insistence that the KNU lay down arms as a precondition for reaching a political settlement”. Furthermore, Mahn Sha a member of the KNU dismisses the idea that the KNU is a spent military force. Sha believes that due to the more cost effective approach of guerrilla fighting, the KNU have been able to streamline their military struggle and will continue to be the thorn in the side of the SPDC (Zaw, 2002). There is no doubt that the KNU have suffered from serious casualties, but they have still managed to secure financial resources to fund their campaign, which is a significant factor in why the SPDC have failed to crush the rebellion

(ii) KNU Finance and Resources

The KNU have struggled to obtain support and funding from abroad, something that has plagued the group since their formation. Their main supporter, had been Thailand, when the Thailand government supported having the ‘buffer zone’ policy between themselves and Burma. This policy encouraged Burmese insurgents on the Thai border to continue fighting the Burmese government, thus giving Thailand a buffer-zone between them and the Burmese military. It is unknown how much support Thailand has given over the last few years to the KNU, however, with the recent abandonment of the buffer-zone policy and the fall of Manerplaw, it is likely that any aid from Thailand to the KNU is minimal. Nevertheless, there have been claims recently that the Thailand government is reverting back to the previous buffer-zone policy (Zaw and Sai, 2001)⁷. The KNU website does proclaim that they receive no external support; (we) “continue to fight for our freedom intensively, single-handedly and without aid of any kind from anyone”. The KNU also believe that a reason for their setbacks is because, “we had to stand on our own feet and fight alone without aid of any kind from any country”. These claims have been backed up by KNU chairman Saw Ba Thin Sein at the 53rd anniversary of Karen National Resistance Day in January 2002. Thin Sein claims that the KNU receives no external

⁷ However, Bangkok publicly is still pursuing a policy of closer ties with Rangoon.

assistance (Zaw, 2002). Also deputy chairman of the KNU General Saw Bo Mya in an interview, has stated that, “the civil war has dragged on for the last five decades and the KNU has never received any kind of assistance from anywhere” (Zaw, 2003). The KNU have struggled to gain sympathy for their cause, despite Thin Sein claiming that the KNU has sympathy from both inside and outside Burma (Zaw, 2002). However, sympathy for their cause has failed to turn into external support. This is in comparison to insurgents groups in the Philippines and Indonesia who have been able to gain sympathy for their movements, which in turn has resulted in material assistance. Instead, lack of external support has meant that the KNU have basically had to rely on internal sources of income to finance their rebellion.

The KNU have managed to achieve a significant internal infrastructure for acquiring funding and resources. By establishing trade gates on the Thailand border, the KNU were able to derive a significant income. According to Global Witness (2003) the KNU levied a 5-10% tax on goods being passed through trade gates established by the KNU, where the trade consisted of, “value-added consumer goods being imported into Burma and raw materials, including teak, cattle, precious stones and minerals going to Thailand” (ibid:71). Revenue gathered from this tax after trade gates were established by the KNU in 1964, was between one and two million baht (\$40,000 and \$80,000 at an average exchange rate in the 80s of 25 baht to the dollar), on average trade passing daily (Global Witness, 2003:71). Other estimates by the KNU finance minister in 1983 placed the income of the trade zones at 500 million baht or US\$75 million (Smith, 1997:106). Individual trade checkpoints like the Wan Kha gate earned the KNU 5 million baht daily, before the SPDC was able to take control (Zaw, 2002). The first such trade gate was established at Palu south of the Thai border town of Mae Scot in 1964 (Lintner, 1991:17). Taxation on goods like teak at the trade gates earned the KNU US\$60/m³ (Bryant 1997, cited in Brunner et al, 1998:17). However, with internal divisions in the KNU resulting in the split and formation of the DKBA, much of the lucrative trade points held by the KNU, were seized by the Tatmadaw and the DKBA, after continuous military offensives. It has now become extremely difficult for the KNU to collect tax from goods on route to Thailand.

The KNU have also been heavily involved in the illegal logging trade. This was a key factor in the formation of the DKBA, who felt that the proceeds from logging were being unfairly distributed (Global Witness, 2003:71). It is arguably the most crucial source of current funding for the KNU, now that the trade gates have been taken over by the Tatmadaw. However, like the trade gates, many forest areas and sawmills once held by the KNU were captured by the DKBA/SLORC offensives in the mid 1990s (Global Witness, 2003:76-77). Concessions paid by logging companies also provide another source of income for the KNU. For example the Htoo Company subcontractors pay a bond to the KNU as well as having to pay SPDC troops from engaging the KNU in battles (Global Witness, 2003:76). Many of the logging concessions granted to Thai companies by the Burma government were in KNU controlled areas, allowing roads to be built, giving greater access to the Tatmadaw. However, this did give the KNU a chance to place tax on these companies, until the SLORC ended all 'cross-border' logging concessions with foreign companies in June 1993 (Smith, 1994:99). Tax from charcoal making also provides a small income for the KNU, but control over this trade is generally held by the SPDC and DKBA (Global Witness, 2003:79).

The KNU have also been rumoured to have been involved in drug trafficking. However, the official KNU stance according to Padoe Mahn Sha Secretary General of the KNU is the continuation of a policy to crack down on drugs (Zaw and Sai, 2001). A recent attack by KNU troops on a Burmese army outpost, according to the KNU was because methamphetamines were being smuggled into Thailand from this outpost (Zaw and Sai, 2001). In an interview with Thin Shein, he outlines the policy of the KNU on drugs. He states, "from the very beginning, the KNU has been against drug trafficking and producing. Anyone found in possession of drugs is given a very severe penalty, including capital punishment" (Zaw, 2000b). Furthermore, the official statement on the website states, "Kawthoolei will never permit the growing or refining of opium or the sales and transport of illicit drugs through its territory". However, it is likely that at some time the KNU have been involved in the drug trafficking business, although at a low level.

(iii) The KNU and Small Arms Transfers: The 'Process of Diffusion'

Like the KNU's external sources of finance and resources, their ability to find an external supplier who is willing to supply small arms, has been basically non-existent. However, Thailand has been accused by the SPDC for a number of years, of supplying the KNU with weapons. The problem of obtaining arms from external sources has been recognised by the KNU, who state, "when we took up arms, we attained great successes and occupied many towns and cities. We soon suffered military reserves, however, as we had not prepared for revolution and therefore, had no stockpile of arms and ammunition"⁸. In the KNU's early formation the main problem was the increasing lack of supplies and ammunition the KNU were unable to acquire. However, according to Smith (1997), vital arms purchases could be arranged in Thailand, provided they could be paid for in hard currency (ibid:106). The money for purchases on the Thai black market usually came from the tax collected on trade gates (Lintner, 1991:17). These usually consisted of Vietnamese, Laotian or Thai surplus U.S. weapons. This helped the KNU build up a substantial arms and ammunition stockpile, of which had been lacking in the past (Fredholm, 1993:110&119). Later supplies of weapons to the KNU have come from China-made "Khmer surplus", which were sometimes inferior in quality (Fredholm, 1993:119). There are also reports that black market dealers, who were once the main source of weapons suppliers for the KNU, are now gun-shy about supplying the insurgency (Zaw, 2004).

Internal sources of weapons come mainly from battlefield acquisition. There are not as many reports of corrupt Burmese soldiers being involved in the illegal arms trade, in comparison to countries like Indonesia and the Philippines. However, this is probably due to the lack of information reported by the SPDC regarding such occurrences. Attacks on weapons depots are a common for the KNU to be involved in. This is especially the case with outposts near the Thailand border, where they provide an easier target for insurgent forces like the KNU. The KNU have also been known to manufacture their own weapons, however, not always with great success (Fredholm, 1993:119). The KNU brigade leadership in the military arm of the KNLA are to a certain extent in charge of

⁸ See the Karen website, www.karen.org

providing arms and ammunition, as well as food and other supplies (Fredholm, 1993:119).

The KNU despite their lack of external support, still possess a number of small arms. Weapons captured in a forest village in the Phadi village on 27 March 1995 were believed to belong to the KNU. The weapons included M-16 rifles, AK rifles, anti-aircraft artillery, anti-tank rocket launchers and the relevant ammunition. Arms and equipment acquired by the KNU has improved over time from their initial establishment to their current standings. This is highlighted by Lintner (1991) who states, “the rag-tag Karen guerrillas started to look almost like a regular army, with smart uniforms, steel helmets and officers’ insignia” (ibid:17). Journalist Bruce Connew who spent some time with the KNU insurgents, comments that when attacked, the KNU were able to respond with machine guns, rockets, rifles and grenades (1999:61). Connew (1999) also highlights how important Claymore mines are to the KNU, when ambushing and attacking the Tatmadaw forces (ibid:62). This point is highlighted by Selth (2000) who has found that various insurgent forces in Burma like the KNU have acquired landmines from many sources, such as the United States, Russia and China. Before the fall of Manerplaw the KNLA brigade were believed to have its own arsenal of landmines with a large workshop being based at its headquarters (Selth, 2000).

(iv) The Propensity of Armed Violence by the KNU and the use of Small Arms

Despite most of the insurgent groups in Burma failing, because they lack the ability to acquire external and internal material assistance, the KNU has still managed to be successful in sustaining their separatist objective, by means of armed conflict. There is no doubt that the KNU has suffered at the hands of the Tatmadaw, and as a result has lost control over large parts of territory in the Karen state. This has seen the subsequent demise of lucrative income derived from taxes on trade checkpoints and logging. However, by moving to guerrilla tactics the KNU have been able to minimise the cost associated with running an irregular army, and despite having no external aid, they have been able to maintain an army capable of continuing to fight the ruling SPDC. The example of the KNU shows how vital it is for an insurgent group to have some form of

internal income and support, in order to continue with military offensives. Despite having no external aid other than Thailand, where aid is now believed to be minimal, the KNU have demonstrated that it is possible to rely on internal methods to acquire finances and resources, as well as small arms. In comparison to other insurgent groups operating in areas of Southeast Asia, like Mindanao in the Philippines and Aceh in Indonesia, the KNU have had virtually no external aid and have basically been involved in armed conflict with the Burmese government with no outside help at all.

Despite the lack of international support for the KNU, the group has continued to be involved in armed conflict that has stretched over a number of decades which has been characterised by its duration and numerous cease-fires and peace agreements that have failed. A significant reason for this, is that despite the inability of the KNU to acquire small arms from outside sources, they have still managed to acquire enough weapons internally to continue to engage the SPDC troops in battles. The Burma government has highlighted that if it can cut down an insurgent group's finance and resources, it can severely restrain the ability of an insurgent group like the KNU to operate. However, acquiring possession of arms internally, or through the black market is something the KNU have continued to achieve, making the conflict cycle in Burma more difficult to solve. Despite the SPDC being able to cut back on the external income the KNU were able to achieve throughout the 70s and 80s, the KNU have still managed to finance their ongoing operations.

With the military offensive against the KNU in the mid 1990s, battles between the two sides have become less intense and frequent. A large factor due to this is the inability of the KNU to field as many troops as they had in the past. Another factor is the lack of arm supplies the KNU have, and the diminishing income the KNU are faced with, meaning fewer arms can be purchased on the black market. However, the KNU have shown that even with lack of finances and arms suppliers, if some form of arms supply is present, be it external or internal supply, it will be enough to continue carrying out guerrilla operations against government forces. This highlights how easy it is for conflicts to stagnate if an insurgent force has any form of arms supply whatsoever, and is unwilling to lay down their arms in peace talks or cease-fire agreements. It also highlights how vital

arms supplies are in allowing groups like the KNU to continue to carry out armed conflict against the ruling government of the state.

3.4 The Shan State Army (SSA)

(i) Background and Goals

The Shan State Army was formed by representatives of the three largest insurgent groups in the Shan State after a meeting on 22 April 1964. Fredholm (1993) comments that, “since then the SSA has remained the main politically motivated insurgent group in the Shan State” (ibid:159). The political wing of the SSA the Shan State Progress Party (SSPP) was formed on 16 August 1971 and become part of the National Democratic Front (NDF) of which the KNU was part of (Fredholm, 1993:160). A few years later in 1977 the SSA leadership was torn by factionalism over the alliance with the Communist Party of Burma (CPB). This caused the SSA to split into two different factions. The first faction consisted of SSA North which comprised of the SSPP who then allied with the CPB. The SSA South (SSA-S) which shifted to closer cooperation with the Third Chinese Irregular Forces of General Li Waint made up the second faction. Despite the split, the SSA was able to field 8,000 to 9,000 troops, despite only having enough arms for half of this force (Fredholm, 1993:162). In 1989 a majority of the fighting force of the SSA made a truce with the SLORC, while the remainder allied with the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) (Becka, 1995:183).

The SSA like the KNU has had the explicit goal of secession from Burma, but as Silverstein (1958) points out, the government has large investments in the Shan State and the region is an important source of raw materials (ibid:57). Hence it is unlikely that the Burma government will ever grant independence to the Shan state. Estimates of SSA troop strength in the 1970s were around 3,000 (Fredholm, 1993:160). The current headquarters of the SSA are based in Loi Tai Leng. The SSA claim that a tenth of Loi Tai Leng's population are soldiers at arms (Marshall, 2005). The leader of the SSA insurgent group Colonel Yawd Serk believes that the Shan people still support them in their quest to obtain their own sovereignty (Zaw, 2000a). Estimates of SSA troops according to Thailand-based analysts range from two thousand to six thousand (Moncreif, 2002).

However, the SSA may possibly have the highest turnover of any insurgent army in Burma (Fredholm, 2003:164). Currently, the SSA have been listed by Eriksson and Wallensteen (2004) in the Uppsala Dataset as an unclear case due to insufficient information regarding the group being involved in active conflict.

(ii) SSA Finance and Resources

Like the KNU, the SSA has struggled to gain income from external sources. In an interview with SSA leader Colonel Yawd Serk, he claims that “I used to ask for [arms] assistance but what we ask for now is to solve [our] problems in peaceful ways (Zaw, 2000a). It is likely that the reason for this is that, there are few if no willing suppliers to provide financial assistance to the SSA. Although there have been allegations by Thai based news reports that the Thai military has covertly supported the Shan, despite Shan leaders denying the allegations (Moncreif, 2002). In the Shan State itself, there are little minerals or other resources suitable for plundering, which could be used to purchase arms and ammunition (Fredholm, 1993:164). In a more recent interview Yawd Serk, claims that the Shan exiles overseas provide a source of income (Marshall, 2005).

Internal sources of income for the SSA is again similar to that of the KNU's. Like the KNU, the SSA earns revenue from taxing goods at check-points when they are crossing the border into Thailand (Moncreif, 2002). This revenue includes taxes of 5 percent imposed on dry goods and 10 percent on the value of cattle (Fredholm, 1993:164). The SSA before its split had been alleged to be involved in the drug trade. Renard (1996) states that, “in 1973 the SSA and Lo Hsing-han agreed to offer to sell the annual Shan opium crop to any recognised international or governmental body” (Yawnghwe, 1987, cited in Renard, 1996:61). However, in the 1970s the SSA harvest of opium was only 0.2 percent of all opium produced in the Shan State at the time. Nevertheless, the SSA still levied a 10% opium tax on the growers, and another 10% on the buyers (Lintner, 1993:20). There have also been allegations that the SSA are still involved in heroin and methamphetamine trafficking (DEA, 2002:9). However, officially the SSA has adopted a strong anti-drug policy “in hopes of gaining political and military support from Thai and American authorities” (Moncreif, 2002). Furthermore, there have been reports in Thai

papers that the SSA is now active in attacking drug traffickers and the army is fighting against the illicit drug trade (Zaw and Sai, 2001)⁹. Yawd Serk reiterates that the SSA is not involved in the drug trade and is funded by taxing goods such as logs and livestock (Marshall, 2005). Other forms of internal finance also come from villagers who are obliged to pay tax and contribute rice and timber exports to China (Fredholm, 1993:164 & Lintner, 1993:60).

(iii) The SSA and Small Arms Transfers: The 'Process of Diffusion

The SSA has struggled to obtain weapons both externally and internally since the early formation of the group. Initially in the 1960s weapons were so scarce that there was only one rifle to every five soldiers and the group has frequently been the poorest armed group in the Shan State (Fredholm, 1993:158&159). This has meant that many troops in the SSA have been expected to account for every bullet they fire (Fredholm, 1993:161). Capie (2002) states that, “in addition to weapons captured from the Tatmadaw, most of these are bought illicitly from Thailand, Laos and southern China” (ibid:65). Most of the weapons acquired by the SSA have come from internal sources and supply. Generally this has been from ambushes and raids on government forces and stockpiles of weapons. The weapons the SSA are equipped with include the Ak-47 assault rifle, pistols of varying calibres and Russian-made RPK M-47 rifles (<http://acd.iss.org>).

(iv) The Propensity of Armed Violence by the SSA and the use of Small Arms

The SSA are clear examples of how ineffective insurgent groups can be if their ability to access arm supplies is limited. While the SSA has been the main Shan insurgent groups in Burma for a number of decades their ability to challenge the Tatmadaw and the ruling SPDC has been extremely limited. This is in contrast to the KNU who for a number of years were able to secure a number of bases in the Karen state. The main difference between the two groups was the ability to acquire small arms. While the KNU did have the same problems of sources of supply for small arms as the SSA, they were able to acquire a number of financial windfalls (such as tax's on trade gates) that allowed them

⁹ According to Marshall (2005) the SSA claim that they killed 337 UWSA soldiers in April 2005 alone, who are known drug traffickers.

to purchase small arms on the black markets. This was definitely an advantage the SSA did not have, and highlights the disadvantages of not having external supporters that insurgent groups in the Philippines and Indonesia enjoy. The SLORC and later the SPDC recognised the importance of first stopping the financial income insurgent groups like the SSA were able to enjoy and then restricting the ability of these groups acquiring weapons through internal sources.

However, the limited finance and arms supply the SSA have been able to receive has still meant that the duration of armed conflict in the Shan State has been prone to longevity. The intensity of battles in recent years has been very light and the number of casualties reported by either side has been minimal. This has been mainly due to the overwhelming superiority the Tatmadaw has had over any insurgent force in the Shan State in the last few years. Like the KNU the SSA has had to rely on guerrilla tactics to engage the Tatmadaw. This has had mixed results, on one hand it has allowed the SSA to get away with having minimal armaments in its possession, while on the other hand it has meant that the SSA have basically conceded any territory gains made in the Shan State in previous years. The frequency of battles between the two sides has also been minimal, with the SSA more concerned about ammunition preservation.

While the conflict has been less severe in the Shan State in the last few years, the SSA have still continued to recruit members in the hope that they may force the SPDC to the negotiation table. However, this has been conditional on the SSA disarming themselves, something they are not prepared to do. Despite the lack of support for insurgent movements in the Shan State, armed conflict has continued due to the erratic supply of internal income and arms supply. However, it is likely that any insurgent force in the Shan State will struggle to engage in frequent and intense battles with the Tatmadaw in the future, unless a steady source of income and arms supply can be found. This will mean that conflict by Shan insurgent forces will continue to stagnate and perhaps end, unless the conditions for insurgents to prosper in the Shan State improve. Leader Colonel Yawd Serk, "is not expecting peace for his long-time suffering Shan anytime soon" (Marshall, 2005).

3.5 Conclusion and the Analysis of Key Questions on Burma

Internal Conflict in Burma has largely in the last few years been kept under control by the ruling SPDC government. However, it is likely that ethnic tensions are boiling underneath and that conflict will flare up again in the near future. For a group like the KNU or the SSA, the lack of external support has largely hampered any offensives against the Burmese government. This has meant that both of these groups have been solely reliant on internal sources for finance and arm supply. The black market has been an option for purchasing weapons for both of the groups, however, lack of finances has prevented any substantial purchases. This is highlighted by the table on the following page. Out of the three case studies presented in this thesis, the Burmese military ‘the Tatmadaw’ has been the most successful in being able to suppress any ethnic rebellion. This has largely been due to the ‘Four Cuts’ counterinsurgency policy introduced in the 1960s by the Burmese government, “designed to defeat armed groups by cutting off their supplies of food, sources of funding, recruits, and intelligence” (Sherman, 2003:229). However, this has come at the cost of a decline in the standards of living for many ethnic Burmese because of the substantial increase in the military budget by the ruling military regime.

Another factor the SPDC has been able to use in obtaining control over insurgent forces in Burma, is the offering of economic incentives to insurgent groups to encourage disarmament and the signing of a cease-fire. The crack down on sources of funding for insurgent groups in Burma by the SPDC especially in the last few years has been vital in preventing arms purchases by the KNU and the SSA. This is in contrast to previous decades where the KNU were able to acquire substantial income from taxes on trade gates, where this money could then be used to obtain small arms. This is highlighted by Sherman (2003) who comments “by the 1960s, however, a burgeoning black-market trade-fuelled by macro-economic mismanagement and nationwide insurgencies of essential commodities-enabled these armed groups to increasingly self-finance the procurement of arms and ammunition” (ibid:232). This internal finance obtained by insurgent groups like the SSA and the KNU became even more important when what little external support the groups obtained from Thailand, gradually stopped with the

abandonment of the buffer zone policy. This is again pointed out by Sherman (2003) who states, “gaining control over illicit economic activity became essential to the very survival of ethnic minority insurgents groups” (ibid:233). This was especially the case for the KNU and the SSA. However, due to the Tatmadaw being able to cut down the flow of income from these activities, the KNU and SSA have lost control of many of the trade gates they once operated. In the case of the KNU, the revenue that had previously been obtained from illegal logging has been severely affected. This has had a flow on effect in their ability to secure supplies for weapons and armaments.

Table 3.1 Summary of KNU and SSA External and Internal Sources

The Karen National Union		
	Sources of Finance and Resources	Sources of Small Arms
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thailand (Limited) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thai-black market – Surplus U.S weapons China made “Khmer Surplus”
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade Gates – Tax Illegal Logging Tax from Charcoal making Drug Trafficking (Minimal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Battlefield Acquisition – Raids and Ambushes

The Shan State Army		
	Sources of Finance and Resources	Sources of Small Arms
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thai military (Possibility) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black Market – Thailand, Laos and Southern China
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade Gates – Tax Drug Trafficking (Minimal) Taxation – Shan People Illegal Logging – China 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Battlefield Acquisition – Raids and Ambushes

The KNU and the SSA have shown that it is still possible to continue armed conflict against a ruling government of a country, provided that there is still some form of internal income and arms supply. However, the lack of an external actor willing to support any form of insurgent group in Burma has severely hampered the progress and goals set out by these groups. This is something insurgent groups in the Philippines (and to a lesser

extent in Indonesia) have not had to face. However, the increased military operations against these two insurgent groups have come at the determinant of people in not only the Karen and Shan states, but also throughout the whole of Burma¹⁰. Nevertheless, the ruling SPDC have shown that by cutting off the sources of income and finance for insurgent groups in Burma, it is indeed possible to contain insurgent activities in these areas. Although this can be argued that this method is a short term solution to a problem, as it still does not address the ethnic grievances held by many groups like the Karen and the Shan.

The access and accumulation of small arms was something both the KNU and SSA were able to achieve, when they had control over numerous trade gates, in which they were able to gather tax. However, the subsequent demise of being able to control these trade gates has left both groups with little finances to purchase small arms. This has meant that for both the KNU and the SSA, being involved in active armed conflict, to a large extent has been determined by their arm supplies, which within the last few years has been very limited. While internal conflict in Burma has continued to be prone to longevity, the intensity of battles between insurgent and government forces has decreased over the last few years, since the falling of many key headquarters and bases in the Karen and Shan states. Despite these set backs both insurgent groups in Burma have still shown that it is possible to continue fighting in an internal conflict situation with limited arms supplies and suppliers.

¹⁰ The Burma Project states that “According to United Nations statistics the SLORC spends 222% more on military spending than it does on health and education combined” (The Burma Project, 2005)

Chapter 4

INDONESIA

4.1 The Historical Background to Conflict in Indonesia

Current violent conflict in Indonesia has largely been centred on an armed struggle between the Indonesian armed forces (TNI) and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), over control of the Aceh province. Previous conflict areas in Indonesia have included Maluku, Timor and West Papua/Irian Jaya. The Aceh province has an area of nearly 250,000 square km, located on the northern tip of Sumatra Island with a population of about 4.1 million people. According to Kooistra (2001) the roots of the conflict, “date back to the end of the nineteenth century when the Dutch colonial powers decided to expand their colonial rule to the sultanate of Aceh” (ibid:15). Furthermore, Tan (2000) comments that, “the resentments have been exacerbated by the differences between the pious Muslim culture of Aceh and the more secular, *abangan* culture and lifestyles of the Javanese, who dominate the armed forces and bureaucracy” (ibid:36). The continuing conflict in Aceh has to a large extent been over the control and distribution of natural resources in the area. The Indonesian government has frequently been accused by the Acehnese people of exploiting the natural resources in the region, resources that the Achenese feel they should have control of. The profitability of extracting natural resources from the region is hard to ignore. Robinson (1998) states that, “through the 1980s it [Aceh] contributed between \$2 and \$3 billion annually to Indonesian exports, making it the third largest source of exports after Riau and East Kalimantan” (ibid:135). ExxonMobil in Aceh alone generates 30 percent of the country’s oil and gas export income, or about \$1.2 billion a year (Renner, 2002:41).

Initially in Aceh an anti-establishment umbrella organisation was founded in 1939 before the Second World War, by reformist religious called the All-Aceh Ulama Association. In 1953 an insurgency broke out, led by PUSA leader Daud Beureueh, which ended in 1957 when Aceh was granted provincial status (Kooistra, 2001:15). However, the seeds had

been sown for future insurgent movements in Aceh to carry out armed conflict against the Indonesia government. This future conflict after the Daud Beureueh led rebellion was fuelled by President Suharto and his 'New Order' management policies. Again control of natural resources in Aceh was at the forefront to the New Orders management's policies of exploiting natural resources after the discovery of oil and LPG in the 1970s. This coupled with continuing repression by the army and social injustices, created many of the causes of the current conflict in Aceh. This led to Hasan di Tiro leader of the Aceh Sumatra National Liberation Front (ASNLF) and founder of the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka or Free Aceh Movement (GAM) declaring Aceh an independent state on the 4th of December 1976.

Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim state with a population that exceeds 200 million people, centred on the four islands of Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan and Sulawesi (Sjamsuddin, 1984:117). Roughly about half the population is Javanese. Yemeni traders brought Islam to Indonesia 700 years ago. This has led to many Islamic political parties and political organisations being committed to turning Indonesia into a pure Islamic state (Abuza, 2003:61). More recently a new President was elected during the 2004 elections in Indonesia. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, a former general, took over the reins in place of ousted President Megawati Sukarnoputri. Previously Yudhoyono had been a minister in charge of national security under Megawati and was regarded as being influential in peace negotiations with GAM. A majority of the pre- election build-up was dominated by the increasing terrorism and corruption scandals facing Indonesia. Seen as more of a reformer than his predecessor, President Yudhoyono stated in an interview not long after he came to power, that to fight terrorism, "we will improve the capabilities of our intelligence, police and immigration officers to detect terrorist activities" (Elegant and Tedjasukmana, 2004). When asked about restarting peace negotiations with GAM, President Yudhoyono responded by stating:

"There is an opportunity for us to end the conflict in Aceh with a new policy. I appeal to the leaders of the separatists to reunite with [Indonesia], and the soldiers to come out [from hiding] and disarm. That would be the end of the armed struggle, and would allow for special autonomy to be carried out" (Elegant and Tedjasukmana, 2004).

Within a year of this interview, a peace agreement was signed between GAM and the Indonesian government. This had given renewed hope that there can be permanent cease-fire between the two sides. The agreement was signed in Finland on 15 August 2005 and was built around the understanding that GAM will not push for independence and will be allowed to participate in Indonesian politics. In return, GAM will disarm and demobilise its members and hand over their weapons to international monitors. In 2001, mostly civilian casualties accounted for the 2000 people who were killed, along with the several thousand more in earlier years. This is on top of the overall death toll in Aceh since 1961 which may be as high as 100,000 (Renner, 2002:42&45).

4.2 The Growing Gun Culture in Indonesia

The rise of the Aceh rebellion and terrorist organisations like Jemaah Islamiya has further driven the demand for small arms in Indonesia. Furthermore, weapons are being recycled from other conflict zones outside Indonesia, like East Timor, where they are then finding their way into the hands of insurgent groups like GAM. The Jakarta Post reported that arms are being smuggled into Indonesia from Thailand, India, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Sabah in Malaysia. Major suppliers and producers of smuggled arms to Indonesia include China, North Korea, Cambodia, Myanmar and Pakistan (The Jakarta Post, July 10, 2002). This is a result of the sheer mass of Indonesian coastline, stretching around 81,000 kilometres, made up of 17,506 islands which makes it difficult to guard against arms smuggling (The Jakarta Post, July 10, 2002). Furthermore, the location of Aceh at the head of the Malacca Strait, which links the Pacific and Indian Oceans, is one of the busiest waterways in the world. This makes it harder for Indonesian authorities to intercept any illegal arms shipments that may be bound for insurgent groups like GAM.

Legislation and legal controls by Indonesian authorities like many other Southeast Asian nations suffer from inadequate policies, corruption and mismanagement. While in comparison to other countries like the Philippines, Indonesian legal controls are an improvement, they are still poor in comparison to the neighbouring country of Australia. Like the Philippines, Indonesia has no law regulating the activities of arms brokers

(Kramer, 2001:24). However, unlike the Philippines, licences for guns in private possession are granted in Indonesia “only to individuals who have reached a high-level position within their occupation, whether civilian, civil servants or those serving in the military or police” (Kramer, 2001:7). Furthermore, licenses in Indonesia are only valid for one year, while in the Philippines licences are valid until the death or legal disability of the licensee (Kramer, 2001:10).

4.3 The Gerakan Aceh Merdeka: Free Aceh Movement (GAM)

(i) Background and Goals

The Free Aceh Movement was founded by Hasan di Tiro in 1976 in response to the continuing injustices faced by the Aceh people, due to the constant suppression by the Indonesian government. The military wing of GAM the Angkatan Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (AGAM) was led by Abdullah Syafi'i until his death in January 2002 (Schulze, 2004:13). This was the second insurgency faced by the Indonesian government after the Daud Beureueh led rebellion. The main difference between the two insurgent movements was Beureueh wanted to transform all Indonesia into an Islamic state, while di Tiro sought Achenese independence. GAM's ideology is based around freeing Aceh from political control of the regime in Jakarta, using the argument that Aceh did not voluntarily join the Republic of Indonesia in 1945 but was incorporated illegally¹ (Schulze, 2004:6). Hasan di Tiro believed that if Aceh could become an independent state, foreign support would be more forthcoming as external governments would no longer be interfering with Indonesian domestic affairs (Sjamsuddin, 1984:116). By 1979 the insurgent force had mostly been crushed by the TNI, however, continuing human right abuses and extraction of resources from the area led to the resumption of armed conflict in 1989. Robinson (1998) highlights this point by stating:

“the escalation and persistence of violence and instability after 1989, I have argued, was primarily the result of the specific doctrines and practices employed by the Indonesian armed

¹ This document is written by di Tiro himself, and is available to download on their official website, www.asnlf.net

forces in their efforts to quash the incipient rebellion-in particular the use of systematic terror and the forces mobilization of civilians as military auxiliaries” (ibid:153-54).

The other main insurgent group in Aceh was also founded by Hasan di Tiro, ASNLF, however there have been no reports of members of the ASNLF being active and the group is only nominally led by Hasan di Tiro from his exile in Sweden (Project Ploughshares, 2004).

While the Aceh rebellion is heavily Islamic in nature, Tan (2000) comments that there are also historical, nationalist and economic factors at work (ibid:34). All these factors have contributed to the increasing difficulty of ending armed conflict in Aceh. In May 2003 Indonesian officials estimated the GAM had approximately 5,200 members, with a military strategy focusing on economic and political targets, with the aim of disrupting administration in the region (<http://acd.iiss.org>). However, other estimates place the strength of GAM forces from about 15,000 to 27,000 (ICG, 2001:7). According to the ISS Armed Conflict Database, GAM highlights three main issues in order to sustain support among the populace of Aceh. These issues include; economic problems; transmigration of the ethnic Javanese population; and discontented feeling about the presence of Indonesia security units in the area (<http://acd.iiss.org>). Ross (2003) has divided GAM into three incarnations according to when they have been involved in active conflict:

“The first in 1976-79, when it was small and well equipped, and was easily suppressed by the military; the second in 1989-91, when it was larger, better trained and well equipped, and was only put down through harsh security measures; and the third beginning in 1999, when it became larger and better funded than ever before, challenging the Indonesian government’s control of the province” (ibid:2).

However, even though GAM has increased its military muscle, it still pales in comparison to the size of the Indonesian army. Nevertheless, by continuing to gain support among the Achenese population by highlighting current issues of dispute, GAM will continue to provide a threat to the Indonesian army.

Under former President Megawati Sukarnoputri peace talks resumed with the leadership of GAM in 2001, after previous peace talks had broken down in 2000. However,

Megawati only offered limited autonomy in the peace agreements and fighting resumed in October 2001. A peace accord was signed on December 9 2002, allowing the Acehese greater autonomy, but again the peace process broke down in April 2003 with GAM leaders rejecting autonomy in favour of independence (Abuza, 2003:67). Furthermore, both sides failed to comply with agreement terms; “rebel fighters were reluctant to disarm and Indonesian security forces failed to withdraw to defensive positions” (Project Ploughshares, 2004). This led to the Indonesian government declaring martial law in the province of Aceh. More recently, President Yudhoyono has urged GAM members to lay down their weapons and join efforts to rebuild Aceh after a tsunami devastated the region. President Yudhoyono made the comment that, “I call on those who are still raising arms, to come out...let us use this historical moment to join and be united again” (ABC News Online, January 3, 2005). On December 27 2004, Yudhoyono ordered a halt to offensive operations against GAM and focused the TNI on securing all humanitarian operations (Tedjasukmana, 2005). This has resulted in a peace agreement between the two sides, signed on 15 August 2005 in Helsinki, allowing the GAM to participate in Indonesian politics. At the time of writing the peace agreement was holding.

(ii) GAM Finance and Resources

When GAM were formed in 1976 and began armed conflict, they faced many obstacles, one of which was where they were going to get finance from to buy small arms and pay for operating costs that are associated with an irregular army. This problem was never really solved by the insurgent group and was a major factor in its resulting defeat by the Indonesian army in the late 1970s. However, regrouping by GAM forces at the beginning of 1989 saw them develop a better strategy of acquiring finance and resources to run their operations. Schulze (2004) states that there are three main sources of revenue for GAM, “taxation, foreign donations; crime; drugs and kidnapping” (ibid:24).

Initial external support for GAM was provided by Libya, who also gave the insurgent group extensive training in guerrilla tactics in the 1980s and helped establish the

movement (<http://acd.iiss.org>). However, while Libya had provided training, it did not supply GAM with any additional funds or weaponry (Ross, 2003:17). This was despite Hasan di Tiro promising his soldiers military and financial assistance from Libya as well as the United States (Sjamsuddin, 1984:114). Further funding from external Diasporas is also believed to come from sympathisers in southern Thailand and Malaysia (Tan, 2000:40). Schulze (2004) believes that the largest amount of foreign donations comes from Acehnese expatriates in Malaysia, with an estimated 5,000 Achenese in Kuala Lumpur providing donations (ibid:27). Another source of possible external income for GAM may come from Al-Qaeda, according to US officials, who believe there may be some ties between the two groups. However, the official GAM stance with Al-Qaeda is one of no contact, and currently only limited direct ties between GAM and Al-Qaeda have been uncovered (Abuza, 2003:176). Like the insurgent forces in Mindanao, GAM have had to rely heavily on internal sources of income, which are relatively diversified.

Internal finance comes from taxation on the Acehnese people and donations from wealthier Acehnese (Schulze, 2004:25). Wealthier villagers have been found to be openly harassed by GAM members demanding money, with repercussions severe if this does not occur (Kooistra, 2001:17). AGAM commander Sofyan Dawod and spokesman believes that most of the population does not mind paying GAM taxes, as taxes to the Indonesian government, “are then used to send troops and kill them [Achenese] while we use the tax to defend them” (Schulze, 2004:25). There have also been reports that GAM have carried out piracy attacks on ships in Indonesian waters and have made explicit threats to disrupt shipping in the region (South Asian Terrorism Portal, 2002). GAM has also been accused of funding their operations with illegal logging, drug running and prostitution (Committee on Ways and Means, 2003). There have been reports that illegal logging is continuing in Aceh and parts of Northern Sumatra and is being shipped to Singapore and Malaysia. Ships carrying these logs have been intercepted several times after leaving Acehnese ports. Singapore is a favoured destination as they have excellent conditions for ‘cleansing’ timber of its origins and shipping it to the United States (Committee on Ways and Means, 2003). There has also been evidence that GAM has been involved in the trading and cultivation of marijuana and other drug trafficking activities (Schulze,

2004:27). Furthermore, GAM has been known to generate income by taxing major business in Aceh, including Mobil Oil, PT Arun and ASEAN Aceh Fertilisers (Capie, 2002:41). Also contractors are supposed to be taxed 10 per cent of their profit; small shops 2.5 per cent (Nessen, 2005). Kidnapping has also provided another generating source of income for GAM. Recently in May 2004, 150 civilians were released in a deal brokered by the International Committee for the Red Cross and the Indonesian Red Cross, according to Human Rights Watch (Fisher, 2005). Media coverage showed GAM fighters to be well fed, clothed and armed, many of them carrying expensive satellite phones (Elegant, 2004).

As can be seen, GAM relies heavily on internal sources of income. While Diasporas from overseas Acehnese provide a source of external income, GAM has been prepared to find any new methods and means possible of generating finance and resources. Indonesian military estimates from April 2003 claimed that:

“GAM received a monthly ‘tax revenue’ of Rp 230 million from Banda Aceh, Aceh Besar, and Sabang, Rp 10 million from Pidie, Rp 36 million from East Aceh and Tamiang, Rp 682 million from Central Aceh, Rp 77 million from West Aceh, and Rp 70 million from South Aceh and Aceh Singkil” (Schulze, 2004:27)².

In an interview in TIME magazine a GAM representative by the name of Tengku, stated that, “it costs a lot of money to run a big campaign and the Indonesians economy is weak”. He goes on further to say, “We can wait until the money runs out. We have fought them for 27 years. We can fight on for three times that long until the Indonesians finally get tired and goes home” (Elegant, 2004). This is a clear example of the lengths GAM members are prepared to go to, despite having irregular sources of income. Despite this setback, the International Crisis Group in their report believe that the, “AGAM is not particularly well prepared, trained or disciplined, but a hard core could sustain a lengthy guerrilla campaign” (ICG, 2001:9).

² Data was obtained from Indonesian Military Intelligence (SGI), Lhokseumawe, April 2003

(iii) GAM and Small Arms Transfers: The 'Process of Diffusion'

The weapons and equipment GAM now have access to is far superior to the weapons they first acquired at the start of armed conflict in 1976. These weapons included old guns and remnants left over from WWII (Sjamsuddin, 1984:114). Arms possessed by GAM are estimated at between 1,000 and 1500 modern firearms, a few grenade launchers and a few mortars (ICG, 2001:7). Like the Mindanao insurgent groups in the Philippines, GAM relies heavily on internal sources to acquire small arms and lacks access or the capability to acquire heavier weaponry. Operations and ambushes against the Indonesian army as well as buying weapons direct from TNI personnel has been the most significant source of acquiring weapons for the GAM (<http://acd.iiss.org>). Nevertheless, some external support still exists for GAM. External sources of weapons acquired by GAM have come from Malaysia via Thailand (Project Ploughshares, 2004). A number of shipments have been seized off the Malay Peninsula, which may have been intended for GAM (Chalk, 2001). Expatriate supporters from Aceh in Malaysia and Singapore have also been known to smuggle small quantities of arms to Aceh through southern Thailand (ICG, 2001:8). However, no foreign government recognises GAM, and as such GAM has no foreign sanctuary or support from a friendly government (ICG, 2001:8). This problem was highlighted in the 1980s when GAM forces were easily defeated by the Indonesian army, due to lack of funds and arms from external backers (Ross, 2003:14).

Bedeski et al (1998) is of the opinion that insurgents in Indonesia are among the least likely to receive small arms from abroad, as their numbers are small and they do not have the mechanisms to raise adequate funds for weapon purchases (ibid:10). Nevertheless, there have still been numerous reports of arm shipments to GAM. Muhamad Duad a member of GAM, was captured in the Adaman Sea north of Sumatra, with a cache of weapons that came from a Thai source. Daud stated that, "his rebel movement has long had connections with Thai gun runners and they regularly came to buy weapons". Daud goes on to claim, "his group had concluded at least five deals with Thai gun runners since 2002, involving some 200 machine guns and grenade launchers" (Jinakul, 2004). Inadequate naval patrolling and corrupt officials has enabled this weapons trade through

Thai middlemen to continue (Kearney, 2002). Furthermore, two Thai army sergeants were arrested in the south of the country carrying 15,000 bullets, grenades, landmines and TNT explosives. It was suspected that these were to be dispatched to GAM forces (Mahmood, 2003). The terrorist organisation Abu Sayyaf has also been linked to supplying GAM fighters with weapons (Morella, 2001). Arms purchased through the Cambodian black market and smuggled through Northern Malaysia is also a possible supply of weaponry for GAM.

Internal sources of weapons still remain the primary source of weapons for GAM. This can include, “government stockpiles; either acquired from defectors, purchased from soldiers or corrupt officials, stolen from government arsenals, or procured during insurgent operations” (Kramer, 2003). Reports suggest that state-owned weapons maker PT Pindad has been supplying weapons to GAM (Yamin, 2000). Pindad is only supposed to provide weapons to the TNI, however there have been accusations that workers of the company run their own arms business outside of work. These accusations come after Jakarta police found vehicles carrying ammunitions and weapons stored in boxes labelled ‘Pindad’, on their way to GAM (Yamin, 2000). Police have also arrested army personal on suspicion of selling arms and explosives to GAM, after raids on houses netted significant supplies of ammunitions and weapons (Manggut et al, 2002). The weapons GAM possesses are varied. They have in their arsenal AK-47s and M-16s as well as locally made guns (Kearney, 2002). Locally guns are preferred as they are better suited to the ammunition which can be sourced locally within Indonesia (Kearney, 2002). However, GAM still posses a number of obsolete rifles and weapons left over from the Second World War. A shortage of arms means most GAM fighters are only equipped with homemade firearms, explosive devices or sharp/blunt instruments (ICG, 2001:7).

(iv) The Propensity of Armed Violence by GAM and the use of Small Arms

The Free Aceh Movement and the use of small arms by the group highlights how an insurgent movement can stagnate without enough firepower. The position of the two sides involved in conflict, the GAM and the Indonesian government, has been inflexible

and has resulted in increased violence in the country. The GAM has used small arms to carry out armed conflict with the objective of making Aceh an independent state from Indonesia. The impact of illicit small arm usage in Indonesia has been significant. Since the conflict has begun, some 12,000 people have been killed, with 6,000 people dying since the second phase of the conflict began in 1998 (Project Ploughshares, 2004). Many more have been displaced and made homeless. The main problem that lies at the heart of the Aceh conflict, is that the Aceh rebels are not strong enough to militarily defeat the Indonesian forces. Furthermore, like the NPA insurgent force in the Philippines, GAM have been mainly reliant on raids and ambushes on Indonesian forces to acquire arms. This has meant that battles in Aceh are frequent, but are of low intensity, as the insurgents do not have enough arms or ammunition to carry out prolonged military offensives.

There is also evidence that GAM like other insurgent groups have used peace talks and cease-fire agreements to re-group and re-arm. After the signing of the 'Cessation of Hostilities Framework Agreement' in 2002 a decline in the casualty rate in the conflict occurred. However, the agreement was abandoned in May 2003, after accusations by the Indonesian government that GAM were using the agreement to rebuild their government structure, expand their influence in the countryside and rearm themselves with new weapons (Aspinall and Crouch, 2003:36). This has furthered increased the duration of conflict in the region, as GAM have been able to re-arm themselves after long periods of fighting with the TNI. This has been critical as GAM have struggled to acquire small arms in the past, and resulted in their subsequent defeat soon after their formation.

Tan (2000) finds that GAM have "never really had the numbers or ability to hold on to large swathes of territory, unlike the much larger Moro rebel movement in Mindanao", but "there is an external dimension present in the form of relatively stable arms supply and financial support from sympathisers abroad" (ibid:40&41). While internal sources are an important source for weaponry and finance, external sources still provide a valuable source for supply of arms and income to insurgent forces. In GAM's early formation Hasan di Tiro placed too much emphasis on gaining external support, meaning

that finding new internal support was neglected (Sjamsuddin, 1984:116). However, as can be seen in the case of GAM, internal support is not sufficient enough for the movement to carry out a full scale civil war. This is in comparison to the insurgent groups in Mindanao who are better funded financially and are able to acquire arms with more ease externally. However, as Tan (2000) highlights, “the conflict has been characterised by durability, resistance to negotiated settlement and growing severity” (ibid:41). A lot of this can be attributed to the supply of weaponry GAM has acquired. While limited in their finance and resources, GAM have continued to carry out armed conflict in Indonesia, resulting in increased duration of the conflict, as well as increasing the frequency and intensity of battles.

4.4 Conclusion and the Analysis of Key Questions on Indonesia

The effects of internal conflict in Indonesia have been drawn out by insurgent groups and the correlating use of small arms. GAM the main insurgent group that were until recently involved in active armed conflict in Indonesia has used various sources of finance and resources to acquire small arms. Like other insurgent groups in the region, GAM has had to rely heavily on internal sources to acquire small arms. As highlighted by the following table of external and internal sources on the following page, GAM have had no foreign government backing, unlike the insurgent forces in Mindanao. Instead GAM has had to rely on expatriate supporters and corrupt military personal from other countries. This table supports Bedeski et al (1998) opinion that GAM are among the least likely to receive small arms abroad. However, GAM has sourced enough weaponry internally to continue to carry out armed conflict. Suppliers of small arms such as workers from arms manufacturer Pindad a state owned enterprise has been enough for GAM to survive and gradually strengthen its support over the last few years. Furthermore, GAM has gained enough support from sympathizers overseas and established enough contacts with arm suppliers, that it still possesses a significant threat to the Indonesian government.

When it has come to financing their rebellion GAM have had to significantly diversify their sources, due to their lack of external finance. This is due to the irregularly of

obtaining income through methods such as kidnapping, prostitution and crime. However, GAM have been able to obtain a steady source of income, by levying tax's on Achenese people, both rich and poor and to a certain extent major business, if they are willing to pay. GAM has also made explicit threats to disrupt shipping in the region (South Asia Terrorism Portal, 2002). It is likely that one of the factors for doing this would be to gain contraband goods from the ships. Contraband goods such as marijuana and logging also provide a valuable source of income for GAM. External income has been absent from most of GAM's periods of active conflict. Libya provided training and resources for members of GAM's insurgent force, but no exchange of money or weapons has known to have occurred. Malaysian has been accused by the Indonesian government of providing GAM with money and weapons, something which has been continually denied by the Malaysian government. The most income GAM acquires externally comes from foreign donations and diasporas from overseas supporters and workers.

Table 4.1 Summary of GAM External and Internal Sources

The Gerakan Aceh Merdeka: Free Aceh Movement		
	Sources of Finance and Resources	Sources of Small Arms
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libya • Diasporas - Southern Thailand and Malaysia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indonesian Military • Malaysia – via Thailand • Expatriate Supporters – Malaysia and Singapore • Thailand Suppliers and Military • Abu Sayyaf • Cambodian Black Market – via North Malaysia
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxation – Aceh People and Major business (e.g. Mobil Oil) • Crime • Drug running • Trade and Cultivation of Marijuana • Kidnapping • Piracy • Illegal Logging – Aceh and Northern Parts of Sumatra • Prostitution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battlefield Acquisition – Raids and Ambushes • Leakage of Government Stockpiles – 'PT Pindad' • Purchases off Government Soldiers – Black Market Sales

Small arms transfers to GAM have been vital in the insurgent group being able to re-establish itself as a group that has been able to make the Indonesian government

acknowledge that there is and has been, serious problems in the management of Aceh. The supply of weaponry to GAM and their ability to replenish their stocks was vital in the late 1990s, as it allowed the group to resume active armed conflict, after a period of inactivity. Without this supply it would have been likely that GAM would have been unable to resume active armed conflict after the insurgent group was crushed by the Indonesian military in the early 1980s. Access to small arms and ammunition has allowed GAM to carry out long periods of fighting. The use of small arms by the GAM in Aceh has made the conflict more durable and fighting has become more intense over the last few years. This can be seen in the overall causality figures suffered in the internal conflict in Aceh, with 5,000 of the 12,000 casualties, mostly civilians occurring since 1998 (Project Ploughshares, 2004).

Like the conflict in Burma, GAM lacks access to heavier weapons, which hinders their progress. This is something that does not seem to bother leaders, who believe that if guerrilla tactics can not win, the cost of continuing the Aceh operation by the military will eventually be too much for the Indonesian government to stomach. This is pointed out by Schulze's (2004) interview of GAM member Amni bin Marzuki, who states, "from a military perspective there is no way for us to defeat them or for them to defeat us...we want them to spend more money on this operation. We want to exhaust them financially" (ibid:41). This highlights the willingness of GAM fighters in continuing violent conflict, no matter how long a period it may take to defeat the Indonesian government. Furthermore, the use of ceasefires and peace agreements has also allowed GAM to rearm and build up supply of their stocks. Overall, GAM have shown that their ability to find arms supplies whether it has been internally or externally has been a key factor in the insurgent movement resuming active armed conflict after long periods of inactivity.

Chapter 5

THE PHILIPPINES

5.1 The Historical Background to Conflict in the Philippines

Conflict in the Philippines has occurred on a regular basis between non-state actors and government forces. This has contributed to the detriment of many impoverished people living in the Philippines. The usual indicators of what causes conflict in a country are present in the Philippines. The country suffers from a poor Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and the income per capita ratio is relatively low. Low school enrolment and a high infant mortality rate are also poor when compared to Western countries¹. Furthermore, the country is run by a government who find's it extremely difficult to contain both a nationwide communist ideological based insurgency and ethnic insurgencies in the province of Mindanao. These insurgencies have contributed to the Philippines having the attributes of a weak state, with a government that relies on external support in order to combat insurgent forces in the country. Poverty and unemployment has been rife in the Philippines even though the country is home to a vast area of natural resources, which is largely centred in the Mindanao region². The Philippines is also home to contrasting ethnic groups, which has made the region prone to internal conflict³.

This chapter will focus on three insurgent groups in the Philippines, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the New Peoples Army (NPA). This is not to say that these are the only three insurgent groups operating in the Philippines, but according to Eriksson et al (2003) they were the main

¹ The GDP in the Philippines for 2003 was US\$80.6 million. The infant mortality rate was 28 per 1000 live births. Furthermore, 7% of the population aged 15 years plus are illiterate (Development Economics central database, World Bank, 2004).

² 37% of the population in the Philippines is below the national poverty line (ibid). The unemployment rate in 2004 was 11.4% (CIA, The World Factbook, 2004).

³ The ethnic groups consist of the: Christian Malay 91.5%, Muslim Malay 4%, Chinese 1.5%, other 3% (CIA, The World Factbook, 2004).

insurgent forces involved in active armed conflict along with the Abu Sayaf Group (ASG) in 2002⁴. The NPA, MNLF and the MILF are historically the most well known insurgent forces in the Philippines and provide the reader with a greater understanding of the supply of small arms to insurgent forces and the relative effect it has on intra-state conflict in the Philippines. They also have a long history of being involved with small arms transfers⁵.

The Mindanao conflict began with the colonisation of the Philippines by Arabs and then later the Europeans, which meant two contrasting religions, were now competing for the attention of the indigenous population⁶. The Arabs introduced Islam to the South while the Europeans introduced Christianity to the North (Islam, 2003:196). According to Islam (2003) the roots of the separatist movement in the Philippines “lie in the profound cultural and religious differences between the Christian, colonised North, and the Muslim, non-subjugated South” (ibid:200). This has meant the Muslim area of Mindanao has been dominated by Catholic and Protestant culture and belief, causing widespread mistrust from the local Muslims who live in this area. The Mindanao conflict is centred on a territorial disagreement between the Philippine government and the two main insurgent forces the MNLF and the MILF. According to Abuza (2003), “some 120,000 people have been killed in Mindanao Province alone, while tens of thousands of people have become refugees in Malaysia in three decades of war” (ibid:33). Between 1972-1975 alone, 60,000 civilians were estimated to be killed from fighting in Mindanao (Mercado, 1984:163). At this time about 80% of the entire Philippine military force was deployed in Mindanao (Cagoco-Guiam, 2004:488). A significant amount of these casualties is due to the use of small arms by insurgent groups⁷. The ethnic insurgent

⁴ However, in the latest update on the Uppsala dataset by Harbom and Wallensteen (2005) the list contains, the Abu Sayaf Group (ASG), the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the MILF as the only insurgent groups involved in active armed conflict in 2003.

⁵ Only recently has the ASG been receiving international attention due to their increasing terrorist activity. However, little is still known about their military capacity or where their source of arms comes from.

⁶ Religion in the Philippines has been broken down as follows: Roman Catholic 83%, Protestant 9%, Muslim 5%, Buddhist and other 3% (CIA, The World Factbook, 2004).

⁷ 85% of external deaths in Mindanao in 2000 were attributable to small arms injuries (Oxfam International, 2001)

movement in Mindanao is in contrast to the conflict caused by the NPA who follow a communist based ideology.

According to Buss (1987), “communists have been active in the Philippines since 1930, when the Philippine economy was suffering the effects of the Great American Depression” (ibid:117). Communism in the Philippines has gained support from many individuals, who feel that the reason why poverty is so predominate in the country, is because of the Western capitalist ideological system introduced into the Philippines by countries like the United States. Jones (1989) comments that the Philippine revolution:

“Was a product of the classical Third World fusion of the peasant unrest and nationalism, and it was shaped by a convergence of forces at work in the 1960s: the war in Vietnam, humiliating inequities in the relationship between the Philippines and the United States, the political radicalism that was sweeping college campuses from Michigan to Manila, and the Cultural revolution in the People’s Republic of China” (ibid:5).

The base of the communist movement in the Philippines was focused on the workers and the pheasants, rather than the high socio economic class. This allowed for communist movements such as the NPA to form pockets of resistance in local communities and villages, where there was greater sympathy for their movement. From here insurgent groups could use these base camps to wage armed conflict against government forces.

5.2 The Relative Ease of Acquiring Small Arms in the Philippines

There are three main sources for acquiring small arms in the Philippines; local manufacture, smuggling, and diversions from government stocks (Garrido, 2003). Local manufacture is based around the cities of Danao and Manduae. These two cities have numerous manufactures and illicit producers of small arms. According to the Small Arms Survey (2003), “as of April 1998, there were about 45 legal firearms manufactures, 522 authorised dealers, and 133 gun repair shops in the Philippines, according to the Firearms and Explosive Division of the National Police” (ibid:34)⁸. Many of the manufactured weapons are made by local gunsmiths in backyard shacks, using any form of materials they can get their hands on. Seno (1996) states that, “a roughly made .38

⁸ Cited in Lubang, 2002.

calibre pistol takes three weeks to produce at a cost of \$8. It will go to a middleman for \$14 and then on to the end-user for nearly \$60” (ibid). These middlemen often sell on these weapons to criminals and drug lords, as well as non-state actors. Production by local manufactures is often the result of demand for low cost weapons that is fuelled by criminal groups, rebel groups and for personal defence (Small Arms Survey, 2003:33).

The lack of law and regulation in the Philippines regarding the making and possession of small arms is one of the most lax in the ASEAN states. Policy development are responsibilities of the Philippine Centre for Transnational Crime (PCTC) under the office of the president, which has continued to be constrained by insufficient funding and capacity (Pattugalan, 2003:4). This has contributed to the problem of small arm proliferation in the Philippines, as a result of, “liberal gun laws, civil strife and ineffective law enforcement arising from insufficient capacity, corruption and political influence on law enforcement” (Pattugalan, 2003:4). There are as many as 2 million unlicensed guns in the Philippines, which further fuels the intra-state conflict in the region (Teves, 2002). However, this is not seen as a problem by a majority of the local population in the Philippines. Instead gunsmiths are seen as part of the long-standing gun culture that has been operating in the Philippines over a number of decades. Out of the ASEAN states the Philippines, “is the only country that seems to have no general requirements to be met prior to the (gun) application process, except that the applicant must be over 21” (Kramer, 2001:7). Furthermore, Philippine law does not require licensed private small arms to have a unique, distinguishing mark to allow for inventory control and weapons tracing (Kramer, 2001:10). The legislation that exists in the Philippines has fuelled the insurgencies in Mindanao and has allowed greater freedom for arms brokers to operate in. Philippine legislation has also given the opportunity to individuals to diversify legal small arms to the illicit circuit (Kramer, 2001:24). This has seen a continuing trend of small arms being diverted from government stocks into the illicit circuit and black market.

The smuggling of small arms in the Philippines has proved to be a substantial problem for the Philippine government. Not only is there the problem of arms flowing into the country that non-state actors may acquire, but there is also the problem of arms flowing

out of the Philippines. In 2002 the Taiwan coast guard seized 173 guns and over 8000 rounds of ammunition from a boat near the coast of Tamsui, which had come from the Philippines (Huang, 2002). The arsenal had a market value of NT\$70 million, which included submachine guns, M16s, satellite phones, and the accompanying ammunition (Huang, 2002). Furthermore, there is also Philippine involvement in the Japanese underworld with the criminal group Yakuza. Firearms are coming from illegal producers in Cebu and are exported from different exit points like Batangas, Ilocos Sur and northern parts of the Philippines (Dursin, 2000). With the increased sophistication of arms smuggling in and from the Philippines, there is a plentiful supply of weapons for insurgent groups to acquire. How much they buy, will often depend on their finances and resources.

5.3 The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)

(i) Background and Goals

The MNLF was one of the initial insurgent organisations in the Philippines that had the aim of turning Mindanao into an independent state. The organisation was formed by Nur Misuari, a professor at the University of the Philippines in 1968 and the group began an armed insurgency in 1972 (Abuza, 2003:38). Their main objective was the complete liberation of the Moro homeland (Islam, 2003:202). This would be achieved by two forms of resistance: parliamentary participation and armed struggle (Mercado, 1984:160). The MNLF relinquished its goal of independence for a Muslim homeland in favour of an autonomy agreement with the government in 1987 (Abuza, 2003:40). Apart from independence other goals included the changing of political power in order to limit the distribution of poverty (Yegar, 2002:268). The MNLF was supported by young secular-educated Muslims, which according to Quilop (2000), “was a region-wide network of organisations that tried to consolidate the various existing (Muslim) forces” (ibid:22). Initial fighting between the MNLF and government forces lead to President Ferdinand Marcos imposing martial law on the country in September 1972, and the immediate collection of all guns from civilians. By the end of 1972 the two armed forces carried out

a full-scale civil war on the island of Jolo. By 1973 mainland Mindanao was also at war. A cease fire occurred in December 1976 in Tripoli, Libya. The Libyan government also promised to scale down the support of the MNLF by cutting down the flow of weapons. However, the peace agreement did not last long with reoccurring disputes over the parties' leadership (Guitierrez and Borrás, 2004:67). Nevertheless, the common denominator in the MNLF leadership continued to be Islamic ideology (Madale, 1984:179).

The government and the MNLF signed a peace agreement in 1996 in the ceremonial hall of Malacanang Palace after 47 months of negotiations. A crucial part of the peace agreement was centred on not forcing the MNLF to disarm or demobilise. At the time of the peace agreement military records showed some 17,700 MNLF members, compared to a peak strength of 21,200 individuals in 1977 (Makinano and Lubang, 2001:25&30). However, recent peace efforts from the government and MNLF have broken down due to a lack of agreement over key issues. In November 19 2001, a faction of the MNLF, led by Nur Misuari, took up arms again. In nearly two weeks of fighting some 147 people were killed (Abuza, 2003:43). Nonetheless, many individuals within the MNLF still believe that a peace process can be worked out between the group and the government. These has seen reduced conflict between the MNLF and the government, and in the most recent Uppsala dataset (2005) the MNLF have not been included, because they were not involved in active armed conflict, and had not reached the threshold of 25 battle-related deaths (Harbom and Wallensteen, 2005). However, the MNLF have still been known to carry out skirmishes with the Armed Forces of the Phillipines (AFP). One of these skirmishes occurred more recently on the island of Jolo in February 2005. Estimation of deaths included 22 soldiers and 60 rebels. The current conflict however does not involve the MILF (Spaeth, 2005a:38). It is believed that the conflict come about as Misuari realised that he would lose re-election as governor of his mega- province (Spaeth, 2005b:35).

Much of the lack of fighting by the MNLF has been due to the rival insurgent force the MILF recruiting members from the MNLF. This was a result of some of the MNLF

members not willing to commit to the peace process with the Philippine government. For many of the members in the MNLF, being granted autonomy would not suffice. Instead they were only committed to the peace process, if the Philippine government gave the Mindanao region full independence. Currently Misuari is in custody after the 2001 attacks, but he claims that 99 percent of MNLF members still consider him as their leader (Manila Bulletin, January 1, 2004). However, why the MNLF is no longer as strong as the MILF, there still remains loyal members to Nur Misuari, which means that for the Philippine government the MNLF still have to be viewed as a security threat.

(ii) MNLF Finance and Resources

There are a number of external and overseas supporters who have provided a significant amount of money and resources for the MNLF movement, especially in the past. Many of these supporters came from the Middle East. Libya even established an Islamic Directorate of the Philippines to coordinate overseas assistance to the MNLF (Tan, 2000:18). In 1972 Nur Misuari received \$3.5 million from the Solidarity Fund of the Islamic Conference Organisation (Yegar, 2002:273). Within the region itself the Philippine government has frequently accused the Malaysian government of providing both military and financial assistance to the MNLF⁹. Although this has been frequently denied by the Malaysian government, there is a compelling evidence to suggest that if not currently, in the past the MNLF had received training in guerrilla tactics within Malaysia. Aid from Malaysian did however diminish after 1969 when the Philippines and Malaysia moved to closer cooperation with the ASEAN states (Yegar, 2002:270). Libya has not denied helping rebel groups in Mindanao in the past. In the Lumper Islamic conference in 1974, a Libyan spokesman told the press that his government was helping rebel groups in Mindanao 'in all forms' (George, 1980:232). Furthermore, in April 1982 a documentary that aired on Australian television tied both the Libyan government and the Malaysian government together, by claiming British and Australian mercenaries were training the

⁹ Indonesia has also been accused of supplying finances and arms to the MNLF. However this is unsubstantial evidence. See Yegar (2002:273)

Moro guerrillas in Malaysia and that they were financed by Libyan leader Colonel Gaddafi (Samad, 1990 cited in Tan, 2003:33).

Other important external support also came from Syria and Iran who approved the revolutionary qualities they saw in MNLF (Buss, 1987:110). Financial support also came from the donations of diasporas from the 16,000 Muslims workers, contracted in the Middle East. MNLF cadres have also received secret military training in many of the Middle Eastern countries who support the MNLF's cause, and have returned to the Philippines as Muslim commandos (Buss, 1987:112). The ability of Misuari to liaison with foreign suppliers of arms was crucial in allowing fighting to continue after the MNLF's formation (Yegar, 2002:270).

Within the Philippines the MNLF has also been involved in drug trafficking activities to finance their movement. The DEA (2003) believe that the MNLF is involved in the production of marijuana, and provides the security for other marijuana fields. Furthermore, the DEA (2003) also believe that the MNLF may be involved in the production of crystal methamphetamine. In some cases, the MNLF have used drugs as contraband in order to buy small arms. Other internal finances come from, "some of the MNLF members who go to urban centres with letters from the Field Commanders soliciting *zakat* (alms) for the movement" (Madale, 1984:83). Furthermore, the MNLF have benefited from villager support who apart from providing money, have also provided commodities such as rice, chicken or root crops (Madale, 1984:184). In many instances money raised from these Muslim communities may have been diverted to buy small arms (Makinano and Lubang, 2001:19).

(iii) The MNLF and Small Arms Transfers: The 'Process of Diffusion'

Most of MNLF's small arms come from battlefield acquisition or are bought from government soldiers (McDonald, 1987:14). This was especially an important method for the MNLF later on, when external aid of arms supply started to dry up. The MNLF as well as the MILF have also established pipelines for small arms transfers among the Maguindanao and Maranao populations of south-central Mindanao (Davis, 2003).

Improved tactics and capabilities in guerrilla warfare from 1977 to 1981 led to reported successful ambushes and attacks against government forces (Mercado, 1984:166). The most powerful weapons the MNLF possess are the 61mm and 81mm mortars, which were both captured in battles. Furthermore, the MNLF also possess a small number of small motor boats, which have M60s and .30 calibre Brownings mounted onboard them (McDonald, 1987:15). The MNLF are also believed to have the ability to make their own small arms and ammunitions, at a low level capacity. These include home made mines as well as the M79 grenade launcher (McDonald, 1987:15 and Yegar, 2002:272).

Ceasefires between insurgent and government forces can also affect the cost and supply of weapons, as the MNLF has found out. Data Halun Amilussia of the Lupal Revolutionary Committee stated that “since the ceasefire the price of the weapons has gone up very much”. Amilussia goes on further to state, “when we were fighting, we took weapons from the soldiers that we killed, or sometimes we could buy their weapons. Now there is a cease-fire, we do not get weapons from fighting since we can only buy. It is very expensive” (McDonald, 1987:13).

This highlights the importance of insurgent groups like the MNLF being able to source weapons from government forces. Without this source of small arms, insurgent groups find it hard to acquire small arms, because of the cost factor. This leads to the bizarre situation as described by McDonald (1987), “of some new recruits in the MNLF expressing half-heartedly the desire to resume fighting so that they can get weapons of their own” (ibid:13). McDonald (1987) further relates the price of weapons to the intensity of fighting during periods of hostilities. When a large number of weapons were captured by the MNLF there was less demand for guns on the market. For example an M16 would sell for P10,000 and a 45. Colt for P2000-3000 during hostilities. These prices would jump to P16,000 and P8,000-9,000 respectively during a ceasefire. Furthermore, the correlating ammo used in these weapons would also increase during a ceasefire (McDonald, 1987:14).

Foreign military aid in the past, was a major source of small arms for the MNLF. However, with the end of the Cold War and the subsequent greater transparency in government's external arms transfers, there has been a decline in the availability of external sources for the MNLF in small arms. Two of the most common foreign rifles used are the FAL 7.62 and the G1, both of which are Belgian made (McDonald, 1987:14). However, the most common weapon used by the MNLF is the M16 assault rifle (Oxfam International, 2002:3). Again, many countries in the Middle East had in the past provided the MNLF with small arms and ammunition. Much of the reason of supplying military aid to the MNLF, by Middle East countries like Libya, was to further their own interests in the country, and encourage the Islamic connection between themselves and the Philippines. Malaysia may have provided aid in the forms of arms as early as 1986 (Yegar, 2002:270). Pakistan has also been accused of supplying the MNLF with arms in the past. Libya supplied numerous weapons to the MNLF during the 1970s. According to Yegar (2002), 'Libyan arms shipments arrived in Sabah by way of two Arab emirates in the Persian Gulf' (ibid:272). The arms were then transferred by boat to the Southern Philippines and were believed to consist of AK 47s. Furthermore, according to Davis (2003) it is probable, "that both the MNLF and the MILF were able to import supplies of United States material abandoned in Vietnam after the communist victory of 1975 and later sold onto the international arms market" (ibid). The claim of Vietnamese involvement in arms transfers to Mindanao insurgents was further highlighted, when in 1992 a shipment of United States rifles, which originated from Vietnam, was reportedly purchased by local officials in Mindanao (Makinano and Lubang, 2001:13). However, the MNLF forces were still outgunned by the superior weaponry of the AFP during this period.

(iv) The Propensity of Armed Violence by the MNLF and the use of Small Arms

There is no doubt the use of small arms by the MNLF has greatly influenced the conflict cycle as well as peace processes in the Philippines by causing greater instability. The use of small arms by the MNLF to carry out violence and armed conflict in the region has greatly increased the duration of internal conflict in the Philippines. Tan (2000) sums this

up by stating, “the MNLF launched its struggle for independence in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but after three decades of fighting, the Moro problem has remained intractable as ever” (ibid:32). A significant part of this intractability has been due to the constant source of small arms supply available to the MNLF. The ability of the MNLF to have a continuous source of supply accessible has made it increasingly difficult for the Philippine government to end the Moro conflict. Very few MNLF members turned over their weapons to the government after the 1996 peace accord. This has been highlighted with tensions again flaring up between the Misuari loyalists in association with Abu Sanyaf on the southern island of Jolo. Despite the long periods of inactivity by the MNLF, they were still able to source a method of supply, in which they could carry out armed conflict on the island of Jolo.

The frequency of clashes between the MNLF and the AFP has also been a result of the constant source of supply of small arms the MNLF has been able to acquire. There are also suggestions that the MNLF have used peace talks and cease-fires to re-arm and build up their supply of arms over the years. This can be a feasible argument with evidence to suggest that due to the price of small arms increasing by a significant amount during cease-fires, the MNLF may not be able to sustain the purchase of weapons through black market suppliers. Instead the MNLF may have been forced to break cease-fires in order to replenish stocks of small arms and ammunition. This can account for the frequency and longevity of armed conflict between the MNLF and the Philippine government.

5.4 The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)

(i) Background and Goals

The MILF were formally established in 1984 and have become the largest and most powerful insurgent force in the Southern Philippines after splitting from the MNLF. The MILF took advantage of ceasefires in the mid 1990s to build up its own strength, so that

it is the dominant Moro insurgent group in the region, instead of the MNLF¹⁰ (Tan, 2000:24). The main difference between the two insurgent groups according to Quilop (2000) is the MILF has desired Mindanao to be an Islamic state, while the MNLF have settled for the idea of a secular state in the Southern Philippines (ibid:23). This has allowed the MNLF to be more willing to compromise than the MILF. The MILF by breaking away from the MNLF, enabled the group to distinguish itself from the leadership of Nur Misuari, “and to justify to the Arab world their struggle for jihad so that assistance like arms and zakat, the obligatory alms imposed on Muslims, could be extended to them” (Vitug and Gloria, 2000 cited in Quilop, 2000:23). As Tan (2000) points out the MILF acts as a de facto government which overseas large areas of territory in Mindanao (ibid:21)

The former chairman of the MNLF’s Foreign Affairs Bureau who joined the MILF, has distinguished the MILF from the MNLF by stating, “we want an Islamic political system and way of life that can be achieved through effective *Da’wah*, *Tarbiyyah* and *Jihad*” (Tigalo, 1996 cited in Islam, 2003:205). Salamat Hahim who founded the initial breakaway group from the MNLF, known as the ‘New Leadership’, supported autonomy. The MILF believes that it has more secular aims than the MNLF, and according to Salamat, “the MILF adopts the Islamic ideology and way of life” (Abuza, 2003:40). Salamat has also stated that “the demand of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front is precisely no less than an independent (sovereign) Moro Islamic State”, and the MILF’s long-term plan “is to continue this war until independence is granted” (Abuza, 2003:44).

The Philippine government and the MILF have embarked on numerous peace talks. In July 18 1997 a cease-fire was signed that lasted for nearly three years (Abuza, 2003:45). A peace agreement was supposed to be signed before 30 January 1998. However in May 1999 negotiations reached a deadlock after the MILF demanded that the talks be held in Malaysia, Indonesia or Libya. The government believed that the peace process must be resolved locally (Islam, 2003:207). In 2000 the peace process broke down, when the

¹⁰ After the signing of the peace agreement by the MNLF in 1996, military figures show an increase in MILF’s strength from 8,000 in 1996 to 15,420 as of June 1999. Furthermore MILF’s firearms holdings increased from 10,227 in December 1998 to 11,351 by June 1999 (Makinano and Lubang, 2001:30).

Joseph Estrada administration considered the development projects as ‘unnecessary’ and that they were ‘simply coddling the MILF’ (Tiglao, 1996 cited in Abuza, 2003:46). Furthermore, the government also believed that the MILF was expanding its controlled areas, while negotiations for peace were taking place (Quilop, 2000:26). However, a cease-fire was signed in Tripoli in July 2001, which lasted until the resumption of conflict in February 2003, when Philippine troops attacked an MILF base camp near the town of Pikit. Peace talks had been suspended indefinitely until recently when the government and the MILF agreed to form a joint team that will go after terrorists in Mindanao. This paved the way for the reopening of peace talks in Kula Lumpur in February 2005 where the issue of ancestral domain was discussed (Ma, 2004). However, the peace talks have been delayed with the continuing political scandal facing President Gloria Arroyo over allegations of poll-rigging. At the time of writing the peace talks brokered by Malaysia were due to resume in Kula Lumpur late January 2006.

(ii) MILF Finance and Resources

There have been numerous overseas countries that have financially supported and provided resources to the MILF movement at some point and time. An estimate at being able to field a standing army of 35,000 according to Tan (2000) is due to the ability of the MILF to obtain funds from countries like Malaysia, Pakistan and the Middle East, who are sympathetic to their cause. In its initial years of fighting Libya has been sighted as providing the MILF with most of its finance and resources.

According to the DEA (2003) the MILF like the MNLF receive funding from a number of criminal activities, including kidnap for ransom, petty crimes and drug trafficking. The MILF have also been linked to Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda and the regional Islamic terrorist network Jemaah Islamiya. Military reports believe that bin Laden has been using relief agencies as conduits to provide financial aid to the MILF (Hong Kong AFP, February 21,1999)¹¹. The support MILF has enjoyed from Al Qaeda is not a new

¹¹ One of these relief agencies accused of providing financial aid was the Saudi-based charity, the Islamic International Relief Organisation (IIRO) run by Mohammed Jamal Khalifa. According to Abuza, (2003), an

occurrence. According to Abuza (2003), “the roots of MILF contact date back to the period of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, when the MILF sent an estimated 500 to 700 Filipino Muslims to undergo military training and join the mujahidin” (ibid:90). Al Qaeda funding has become more important to the MILF in recent years, with Libya reducing its financial assistance to both the MILF and the MNLF (Abuza, 2003:95). However, most of the MILF’s income and resources are still from internal sources and the trading of contraband goods.

Extortion of business like logging companies is a big revenue earner for the MILF. Furthermore, the MILF has been known to impose taxation on locals in small communities. According to Abuza (2003) the MILF have many schemes aimed at financing their rebellion:

“The MILF also runs legitimate businesses, including several manpower agencies, such as Pyramid Trading and Manpower Services, that are active in the dispatching of the 1 million Philippine OFWs to the Middle East each year. In addition to revenue from these companies, the MILF also receives kickbacks from other Moro OFWs to the Middle East. The MILF has a vast network of financial holdings and front companies, including many in Manila. The MILF also relies on covert funding from Islamic charities, especially the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, Islamic Wisdom Worldwide, and the Islamic Da’wah Council of the Philippines” (ibid:96).

This highlights the diversion of financing the MILF have been able to achieve. If one flow of finance is stopped the MILF will still be able to rely on other sources of income. This has allowed the MILF to have a significant amount of income, when purchasing small arms. However, the main problem according to spokesman Shariff Moshin Julabbi is still how much money they can raise to pay for small arms (Philippine Daily Inquirer, January 11, 1999).

(iii) The MILF and Small Arms Transfers: ‘The Process of Diffusion’

Like the MNLF, the main supply of weapons for the MILF is battlefield acquisition and leakage of government armaments. However, there have been reports that the MILF has

"Abu Sayyaf defector said the IIRO was used by bin Laden and Khalifa to distribute funds for the purchase of arms and other logistical requirements of the Abu Sayyaf and the MILF" (ibid:93).

built a firearms factory, “somewhere in Central Mindanao” (Philippine Daily Inquirer, January 11, 1999). Shariff Moshin Julabbi apparent consultant of the MILF stated, “the factory has 97 workers who could produce high-calibre weapons and ammunition like a replica of the Russian grenade launcher RPG-2, 60mm mortars, bullets and bombs” (Philippine Daily Inquirer, January 11, 1999). However, Jaafar states that the factory “is modest when compared with conventional firearms factories” (Philippine daily Inquirer, January 11, 1999)¹². According to Julabbi the government are still among the major suppliers of firearms to the MILF, and most of the rebels M16 and M14 rifles and bullets are bought directly from military personal (Philippine Daily Inquirer, January 11, 1999). This is a claim that is repeated by both the MILF and Philippine government officials. However, the official spokesman for the MILF Ghadzali Jaffar has stated that, “in fairness to the military, we have many sources of firearms” (Philippine Daily Inquirer, January 11, 1999). Internal supply of small arms for the MILF also comes from the spill-over in the black market from Luzon in the Visayas (Davis, 2003). There have also been reports that the MILF have tried to buy a number of midget submarines (Kaufman, 2003).

Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network, as well as providing money to the MILF, have also been accused of providing small arms to the MILF. There have been reports that the MILF were awaiting an arms shipment to arrive in February 1999, which had been purchased by money provided by Osama bin Laden (Hong Kong AFP, February 21, 1999)¹³. According to sources in the report the shipment was to contain 3,000 assorted high-powered weapons, from Kalashnikov rifles to anti-tank rockets and landmines. Other external sources of supply have been rumoured to come from a North Korean arms dealer named Rim Kyu Do. According to press report documents recovered from a fallen enclave of the MILF, the rebels had made payments for machine guns, explosives, grenades and other battle hardware in 1999 (Agence France, March 13, 2003). Invoices for the weapons totalled nearly two million dollars. Iraq has also been touted as a possible supplier of small arms to the MILF according to House of Representatives defence

¹² Other reports site the MILF as being able to produce RPG-2, American M-79 grenade launcher and .45 calibre pistols as well as crude anti-personnel mines and bombs (Davis, 2003).

¹³ "Osama bi Laden brother in law Saudi businessman Mohamed Jamal Khalifa financed a number of non-government organisations in Mindanao, that are suspected of being used to channel finances to rebel groups" (www.sapt.org).

committee chairman Prospero Pichay (Agence France, March 13, 2003). Also unconfirmed reports indicate that China and Malaysia have provided the MILF with small arms (<http://acd.iiss.org>). Furthermore, weapons that are purchased through arms smugglers are often obtained via Sabah state in eastern Malaysia (<http://acd.iiss.org>).

According to the IISS Armed Conflict Database the MILF have a various assortment of small arms in possession. Some of the rifles in use by the MILF date from the 1970s, to the more modern M-14 or M-16 rifles. Furthermore, the MILF also use Garand M1 carbines and FN FALs, high powered assault rifles, sniper rifles, as well as a variety of personnel and anti tank landmines. Heavier weapons used by the MILF include M60 general-purpose machine guns, mortars and grenade launchers (<http://acd.iiss.org>). Much of the weapons used by the MILF are of American origin, mainly due to the Philippine military being supplied with weapons through aid packages by the American government. This further highlights the importance of the MILF being able to acquire weapons not only through battlefield acquisition but also corrupt personal in the Philippine military.

(iv) The Propensity of Armed Violence by the MILF and the use of Small Arms

There is no doubting that the acquisition of small arms by the MILF has been used as a means of armed struggle in which to further the group's goals. However, this has often come at the detriment of the resulting impact the use of small arms has had on the Philippines. Not only has the use of small arms increased the intensity and duration of internal conflict in the Philippines, but it has also contributed to the frequency of civil war breaking out in the country. The MILF have been prepared to go to the negotiating table with the Philippine government, but on too many occasions this has been a ploy by the insurgent group, to regroup and rearm themselves, during cease-fires.

The MILF are also an example of how small arms are effective in waging internal conflict through the use of continuous violence. When the MNLF where at the negotiating table with the government the MILF used this time to build up there own resources and armaments, so it would be the dominant insurgent force in the Moro

region. Documents captured in February 2003 by the AFP showing receipts for the acquisition of weapons, have led to AFP spokesman Colonel Essel Soriano, stating that the MILF, “is preparing for war and using the peace talks and the peace agreement as cover” (Kaufman, 2003). Documents according to Soriano also stated that the MILF is planning for, “waging all-out war against government forces through simultaneous and relentless attacks; mounting massive sabotage operations; ambushing military and police convoys; setting up checkpoints and taking hostages and landing arms along beaches” (Kaufman, 2003). Even if the MILF does not carry out these operations, it still highlights the vital role small arms play in the continuous cycle of internal conflict in the Philippines and how small arms fuel the continuing ethnic clashes in the country.

The MILF are still not strong enough to compete with the AFP military so they continue to carry out guerrilla operations. According to Oxfam International (2001), “the guerrilla tactics adopted by the MILF since the middle of 2000 were widely perceived by the local population to be exacting much higher civilian casualties than before”. This has furthered the duration of intra-state conflict in the country. The AFP have access to armoured fighting vehicles, combat aircraft and helicopters, while the MILF have no access to these or other heavy weapons. Hence they are reliant on a continuous supply of small arms in which to wage civil war. This has meant that fighting between the MILF and the AFP is prone to longevity. The intensity of fighting has never reached great heights because the MILF lacks access to heavy armaments. The role the MILF has played within intra-state conflict in the Philippines tends to suggest and highlight that if one side in a conflict, especially a non-state actor lacks access to heavy weapons, an internal conflict will become more intractable and durable.

5.5 The New Peoples Army (NPA)

(i) Background and Goals

The New Peoples Army (NPA) was formed as the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on 29 March 1969 (Casambre, 2004:465). Initial membership of

the NPA consisted of only a few hundred, however, its numbers swelled to several thousand during the early 1970s (Mediansky, 1987:2). By 1985, the NPA was active in 63 of the nation's 73 provinces (Mediansky, 1987:4). According to military estimates in 1988 the NPA had about 24,000 guerrillas with an arsenal of more than 10,000 high powered rifles, grenade launchers and a few mortars (Jones, 1989:9)¹⁴. Chapman (1987) makes the comment that the, "insurgents military war was one of ambushes, raids and assassinations mounted for one of two purposes: to gather arms or to show their peasant allies that they could be protected and the government forces punished" (ibid:15)

According to Mediansky (1987) the NPA is based on a Maoist insurgency doctrine that envisages three successive phase. These are:

"The present stage, 'the strategic defence', is primarily focused on building the basis of nation-wide insurgency; the next phase, 'the strategic stalemate', is achieved when the insurgency is strong enough to frontally challenge the forces of the government; the final phase, the 'strategic offensive', occurs when the fortune of the two sides have been reversed and the government is forced to adopt a defensive posture" (ibid:5).

The NPA view their insurgent movement as being in the advanced stage of the strategic defensive. Accordingly, small arms play a vital role in the NPA moving through the various stages. Casambre (2004) states that the "government considers the following as the roots of the armed conflict: massive and abject poverty, iniquitous of wealth and control over the base of resources needed for livelihood, injustice, and poor governance" (ibid:471). At present the NPA has been listed as a terrorist group by the United States, the European Union, Australia and Canada following the September 11 attacks on the United States. The NPA has been labelled by the Philippine military as the country's top security threat.

(ii) NPA Finance & Resources

Compared to the ethnic insurgent groups of the MNLF and the MILF, the NPA struggles financially to raise the same sort of capital and finance outside of the Philippines. Instead the NPA has had to be more self-reliant on acquiring finance and resources to run their

¹⁴ Other sources estimate the NPA having 10,000 fighters in 1986 (Casambre, 2004:467).

insurgent campaign. However, the NPA did receive funding from China during their initial formation. But ties between the NPA and China were cut in 1975-1976 with the opening of diplomatic relations between Manila and Beijing and the death of Mao (Jones, 1989:8). Instead, the NPA as in insurgent movement relied on pheasant support and the use of contraband goods to finance their rebellion and buy armaments. Chapman (1987) describes the NPA as having a revolutionary underground committee that was in total control of finance. They financed the electricity and water systems from extorted “taxes” on businessmen (ibid:15).

Revolutionary taxes imposed on rural communities by the NPA, was crucial to the funding of the NPA movement. In NPA controlled communities the people are asked to give food and a few pesos that are within their means. Commercial enterprises such as logging provide a more substantial source of income. Failure to pay can result in destruction of logging equipment and assassination of company employees (Mediansky, 1986:7). According to Vitug (1993) the CPP impose a one or two percent tax on the gross income of a company being targeted. The Armed Forces estimate the total income of the CPP in 1987 at P22 million, of which P4.8 million came from revolutionary taxes (ibid:133). Commercial enterprises in NPA controlled areas such as logging companies are likely to regard revolutionary taxes as part of conducting operations in the area. Initially, demands by the NPA for logging companies consisted of basic requests like medicine, food and shoes. This was followed by greater requests for the payment of money to the NPA, which was not a significant amount by logging company standards (Vitug, 1993:125). Furthermore, the NPA see the logging companies as a source of income rather than destroyers of the environment and forests (Vitug, 1993:130). Logging companies concessions according to the AFP are the most lucrative form of taxation the NPA has, worth about P100 million yearly, most of which comes from northern Luzon (Vitug, 1993:134).

The NPA have not only received finance from pheasants and logging companies, but also politicians, landlords, businesspeople and Catholic bishops. In turn by providing accommodation, money and weapons, the NPA would provide protection from criminals,

guarantees against assassination, support on Election Day, and the right to travel through communist-dominated areas, and be unhampered in their business activities (Jones, 1989:10-11). NPA control over resources and rural communities also provided a source of income for the insurgent group. This is discussed by Rutten (1996) who states:

“within rural communities the NPA acquired control over vital resources: villagers’ contribution in food, cash, and information for both the political and military cadres; as well as manpower for part-time positions in the village or full-time posts as mobile cadres or armed fighters” (ibid:115).

The NPA also recruit it personal locally, usually individuals from rural communities, who often are suffering from continuing hardships. It is the rural support base that is crucial to the NPA’s survival and prosperity.

Jones (1989) highlights the diversity of NPA financial resources, when CPP computer disks that were captures by the AFP show that the world stock markets, were a major if not a leading source of funds for the revolution (ibid:245). Furthermore, Jones (1989) comments that:

“A significant share of NPA and Party activities were supported by an elaborate system of taxation primarily targeting larger foreign and Filipino owned businesses, large landowners, concerns engaged in ranching, fish and prawn culture, logging and mining, and even government corporations” (ibid:245).

Because of the lack of external support for the NPA’s movement, the NPA have developed a significant internal infrastructure to support the running costs of its army.

(iii) The NPA and Small Arms Transfers: The ‘Process of Diffusion’

Like the Moro insurgent groups in the Philippines, the NPA has had to be self-reliant on obtaining their own weapons. Most of the supply has come from battlefield acquisition, leakage in government stockpiles and purchases from corrupt officials. Chapman (1987) estimates that some 10,000 high-powered riffles, pistols and machine guns have been obtained in this fashion over the years (ibid:114). The chairman of the CCP Armando Liwanag admits that despite having been able to increase the number of firearms available to the NPA in the last few years, soldiers in the NPA still outnumber the

available rifles 3:2 (Liwanag, 2003). There have also been reports that the NPA has underground factories which make primitive shotguns and handguns (Jones, 1989:244)¹⁵. The NPA has also been lacking in external suppliers for small arms. Thus, when trying to acquire small arms, they find themselves in the same futile position as when trying to raise finance and resources from external sources. Most of the armed confrontations with government forces are used for the explicit purpose of trying to obtain and capture weapons.

External support for small arms to the NPA has been linked to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), who are reported to have provided one shipment of weapons to the NPA through the international black market in 1981 (Chapman, 1987:19). North Korea and China have also been reported as a possible source of small arms for the NPA. China delivered a shipload of Chinese arms and ammunition to the NPA in July 1972 in the named boat 'Karagatan'. However, the government managed to intercept a majority of the shipload when the boat ran aground (Jones, 1989:50&76). Later in 1973, another arms shipment was planed from China to the NPA. But once again the boat ran aground south of Taiwan (Jones, 1989:78-79). Jones (1989) states, "the rebel movement had also developed close relations with Nicaragua and to a lesser extend with Cuba and Libya" (ibid:9). Satur Ocampo a top leader of National Democratic Front¹⁶ in 1986 discussed the possibility of accepting arms from the Russians, however the Russians had shown little political interest in the CPP and the NPA previously. Nevertheless, Satur believed that with American intervention in the region it could unlock the possibility of other sources of supply being open to the NPA, due to anti-American sentiments. Satur states that, "getting more sophisticated arms is now a real question for us. With the [growth] of the NPA, we must face the question of new sources of sophisticated guns" (Chapman, 1987:220). In an interview with Nathan Quimpo former chairman of the NDF he explains the difficulty of the CPP-NPA moving from a guerrilla movement to a group capable of

¹⁵ This claim is backed up by Armando Liwanag who states, "that we can produce certain weapons" (Liwanag, 2003).

¹⁶ The NDF were established in 1973 and are linked with the CPP and the NPA under one umbrella organisation.

regular warfare. This was mainly due to the lack of external support for weapon supplies.

Quimpo goes on to state:

“The Soviet bloc is no longer there, China is not interested in exporting revolution any more, and North Korea is suffering from economic hardships. I don’t think North Korea would be in such a position to export or provide arms and ammunition to the NPA, as it was willing to do in the late 1980s” (Distor, 2003:2).

Quimpo goes on further to states that even if there was a source of arms available externally for the CPP-NPA, “the other problem is how to get these arms in; this was never solved by the CPP-NPA. There were several attempts in the 70’s and again in the 80’s, but they all failed” (Distor, 2003:2).

The lack of military external support for the NPA, led to the ‘agaw armos’¹⁷ campaign, a campaign designed to secure weapons to expand the NPA forces (Mediansky, 1986:12-13). This involved trying to encourage defections from the AFP and using ‘sparrow units’¹⁸ to attack small army units and policemen on patrols. According to Chapman (1987) black market sales were the second largest source of military hardware for the NPA¹⁹ (ibid:190). Chapman (1987) highlights this point by further going on to explain that a soldier earned 1,000 pesos a month and payment was usually delayed. Furthermore, the NPA could purchase almost any type of AFP armament as long as it could raise the money (ibid:189-190). The NPA also partakes on raids and ambushes with the specific goal of acquiring weapons. Raids will consist of NPA squads surrounding a military outpost, outnumbering soldiers three and four to one. Ambushes involve guerrillas lining both sides of a country road, digging foxholes at the edges of the fields and covering themselves with dirt and cane (Chapman, 1987:114). For example one raid on a Philippine Military Academy netted 21 automatic rifles, 14 carbines, 6 machine guns, 1 bazooka, grenade launchers and more than 5,000 rounds of ammunition (Jones, 1989:47).

The NPA have many various weapons in their arsenal. Again a majority is American made, because of battlefield acquisition from the AFP American supplied weaponry.

¹⁷ Arms Grap

¹⁸ “A three-member assassination squad assigned to liquidate informers or other enemies and kill isolated police and military men for their weapons (Chapman, 1987:117)

¹⁹ The first being weapons captured in battle

According to Chapman (1987) the NPA armoury consists of “American made M-16s, M-14s, World War II-vintage garands, grease guns and machine guns. The only weapons not manufactured in the United States were Russian AK-47s” (ibid:116). The IISS conflict database states, “the NPA is known to possess M16s, H&K guns, M30 and LMGs. However, Chapman (1987) found that despite the supply of the weaponry to the NPA, ammunition was in short supply, and each fighter was only permitted to fire only five rounds a day, regardless of their mission (ibid:116). Furthermore, the lack of heavy weapons by the NPA has meant the guerrilla war has stagnated. Nevertheless, the NPA believe that if they could acquire heavy weapons it would change the complexion of the war and bring the group closer to parity with government forces. An NPA commander stated that, “we are unanimous in thinking that if we cannot get heavy weapons we cannot win at guerrilla warfare” (Jones, 1989:242). This could cause further instability in the region with the United States responding to the acquisition of heavy weapons by the NPA, by means of providing the Philippine government with more sophisticated weaponry to battle the insurgent movement (Jones, 1989:9). More recently, there have been claims that the NPA is in a military alliance with the MILF, who are supplying the NPA with arms, a claim denied by MILF spokesman Eid Kabalu who stated that, “our alliance doesn’t include the sharing of weapons” (Kaufman and Ma, 2004).

(iv) The Propensity of Armed Violence by the NPA and the use of Small Arms

While the NPA differs ideologically from the ethnic Moro conflict, the same problems face the NPA as the Moro insurgents. Lack of heavy weapons by the NPA, has forced the two sides into a form of military stalemate. The NPA are aware that they cannot defeat the AFP with the weapons they have in their arsenal, while at the same time the AFP are powerless to end the guerrilla warfare perfected by the NPA. Chapman (1987) comments that the NPA, “is still essentially a raid-and-ambush army, desperate for arms and unable to defend territory anywhere the government forces cared to challenge it” (ibid:121). However, despite numerous offences by the AFP, the NPA have yet to be militarily defeated.

The supply of small arms to the NPA has been steady enough for the NPA to wage a continuous armed conflict since their formation in 1969. The frequency of clashes between the two parties occurs often. This is mainly due to the NPA's method of acquiring arms through raids and ambushes. However, the intensity of fighting between the NPA and the AFP is relatively low. This is not only due to the lack of heavy weapons the NPA possess but also the lack of ammunition the NPA have. Accordingly they are unable to carry out sustained conflict. The NPA are still reliant on guerrilla tactics to defeat the AFP. These tactics consist of concentration, dispersal and shifting with flexibility, with the goals of sizing arms from the AFP (Liwanag, 2003). Tactics that the NPA are aware will not defeat the Philippine military. The lack of heavier weapons the NPA has in its arsenal, means the NPA are confined to fighting within their own controlled territories. This is recognised by the leadership in the CCP, who realise that until there is further growth in the NPA, there will not be enough new recruits that can bring professional and technical expertise useful to the armed revolution (Liwanag, 2003). However, the NPA still enjoys popular support in the countryside, and it is likely that as long as they have some form of supply of small arms, the AFP will struggle to militarily defeat the NPA. This will mean that low intensity but frequent clashes between the two forces will continue to increase the duration and intractability of intra-state conflict in the Philippines.

5.6 Conclusion and the Analysis of Key Questions in the Philippines

Small arms proliferation and misuse has not only harmed innocent civilians and caused thousands of casualties in the Philippines, but they have also fuelled the fire for conflict to continue in a country that is ravaged by insurgent groups. Fighting by insurgent groups in Central Mindanao has resulted in 70 percent of the population being displaced in 2000 (Oxfam International, 2001). As can be seen in the tables on the following page, insurgent groups in the Philippines largely rely on the same internal sources for small arms. This is by far the most productive sources of small arms insurgent groups in the Philippines have. The table also highlights the external sources insurgent groups have had, past and present. This is by far more diversified than internal sources of small arms.

Table 5.1 Summary of MNLF, MILF and NPA External and Internal Sources

The Moro National Liberation Front		
	Sources of Finance and Resources	Sources of Small Arms
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libya • Malaysia • Syria • Iran • Diasporas from middle east workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libya • Pakistan • Malaysia • Vietnam
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug Trafficking • Production of Marijuana • Production of Marijuana fields • Production of Crystal Methamphetamine • Villager Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battlefield Acquisition • Purchases off Government Soldiers – Black Market Sales • Indigenous Production

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front		
	Sources of Finance and Resources	Sources of Small Arms
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malaysia • Pakistan • Libya • Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda • Jemaah Islamiya 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China • Malaysia • Iraq • North Korea • Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kidnap for Ransom • Petty Crimes • Tax on Logging Companies • Manpower Services • Islamic Charities • Network of Front Companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battlefield Acquisition • Leakage of Government Stockpiles • Indigenous Production – Firearms Factory

The New Peoples Army		
	Sources of Finance and Resources	Sources of Small Arms
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China • Stock Markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palestine Liberation Organisation • North Korea • China • Nicaragua • Cuba • Libya
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revolutionary Taxes • Control over village resources • Tax on Logging Companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battlefield Acquisition – Raids and Ambushes • Leakage of Government Stockpiles • Purchases off Government Soldiers – Black Market Sales

Many of the countries that are present in the tables like Iraq, China and Libya are now in no position to supply these insurgent groups with small arms. This has meant all three insurgent groups have had to be reliant mainly on internal sources for their small arms. The MILF have the most sophisticated indigenous production facility, with a firearms factory rumoured to be based somewhere in central Mindanao. Sources of finances and resources are also greatly diversified between the different insurgent groups. The two ethnic insurgent groups fighting in Mindanao are by far better funded externally than the communist NPA. This pattern is unlikely to change, with fewer countries financing communist insurgent movements in general. For insurgent groups that are based around territorial and ethnic disputes, there is still likely to be countries who are willing to support their cause. This is highlighted by the MNLF and the MILF insurgent groups who have numerous external supporters. More recently, Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda who been linked to the MILF with providing both finances and resources. However, the MNLF and the MILF despite their external support, are still mainly reliant on internal sources for their income, such as drug trafficking and kidnap for ransom. The NPA have shown that it is not necessary to have an external benefactor to provide a source of income, as long as you can be self sufficient in providing finances and resources internally. All three insurgent groups are highly reliant on the use of contraband goods, which can be used or traded for small arms.

There is no doubt that small arms transfers to insurgent groups in the Philippines have greatly increased the intensity and duration of internal conflict and civil war in the country. With the constant availability of small arms to non-state actors, the chance of civil war breaking out in the Philippines has increased dramatically. However, the lack of heavy weapons to insurgent groups, has meant fighting is usually not intense enough to produce the casualties suffered in inter-state war. Instead fighting between non-state actors and government forces occurs on a frequent basis, with battles that are of a short duration. The supply of small arms and ammunition to insurgent groups during internal conflict occurring in the Philippines will usually dictate the longevity and intensity of fighting against government forces, in geographical areas favouring insurgent forces.

The use of small arms by the ethnic insurgent forces in Mindanao highlights how weapons continue to increase the duration of a conflict. This is supported in general by Fearon (2004) who finds that ethnic wars appear to last somewhat longer with about a 70% increase in expected duration (ibid:18). However, the case of the NPA can highlight that even if an insurgent group is not based on ethnic divisions, as long as finances and small arms are available, an insurgent force can continue to carry out armed conflict. The NPA have shown that despite its lack of external support, by acquiring finance and weapons through internal methods, this can be sufficient enough to carry out armed conflict. In the Philippines this has come at the expense of civilians who have faced declining standards of living and increased casualties due to the misuse and proliferation of small arms, which has furthered the duration of conflict in the country.

There is also evidence to suggest that access and accumulation of small arms and ammunition by insurgent groups in the Philippines will result in prolonged periods of fighting. Overall this has further extended the total duration of conflict in the Philippines and made the conflict more intractable to negotiations or mediation. There have also been accusations by the Philippine military that insurgent groups in the country use cease-fires and settlements to build up and re-arm their stockpiles with armaments. Not only does easy access to weapons in the Philippines make insurgent groups more willing to form an insurgency, but also gives other insurgent groups, who have already been formed, the chance to resume active armed conflict. This was highlighted by the MNLF who led an attack against a Philippine military base in 2001, the first time they had been involved in active armed conflict in a number of years. Their ability to acquire and have access to small arms was the key factor in the attack. Overall the insurgent groups in the Philippines show that it is highly unlikely or possible to continue fighting in an internal conflict or civil war, without some form of arm supply. These findings are in direct contrast to Gilks (1987) opinion that arms control in the Philippines can only play a minor role in enhancing stability (ibid:92). The lack of arms control in the Philippines and the rampant gun culture that exists throughout many facets of Philippine society is one of the major factors in the increasing instability the country faces.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 The Influence of Small Arms on Intra-State Conflict within Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines

Small arms while lacking the firepower of more conventional heavy weaponry like tanks and aircrafts have played a significant role in increasing the duration and intensity of intra-state conflicts. In the hands of non-state actors, like insurgent groups, small arms constitute the primary weapon of choice in Southeast Asia. The ability of insurgent groups to obtain both external and internal financial and military aid in Southeast Asia has been crucial in allowing these groups to continue in waging armed conflict. The three case studies of Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines highlight perfectly the detrimental effects small arms have on internal conflict in Southeast Asia. While this study only analysed in depth these three countries, the influence of small arms in the rest of Southeast Asia is profound. Many other countries within Southeast Asia have already felt the effects of small arms proliferation inside their borders, for example Cambodia, while other countries like Thailand are beginning to experience the difficulties associated with small arms transfers to insurgent groups.

The continuing violence in the south of Thailand has shown the importance of preventing insurgent groups from obtaining various sources of small arms supply. As tension between the Muslim separatists and the Thailand government continue to rise the use of small arms will continue to be a significant factor in sustaining any conflict between the two sides. Furthermore, countries like Malaysia, Vietnam and Laos have all felt the impacts of small arms use by insurgent groups. In many cases this has caused a profound and humanitarian impact on these countries. Even after conflicts have ended in countries like Cambodia, small arms have been recycled and pipelines have been established that has seen thousands of small arms end up in the hands of other insurgents groups still involved in active armed conflict, throughout the rest of Southeast Asia. A significant

factor in these small arms transfers have been as a result of the lax laws and regulations that have been put in place by these countries and other Southeast Asian nations, which has given rise to the opportunity for, small arms to be diverted into the illicit circuits (Kramer, 2001:24).

A broad hypothesis would be to state that small arms make internal conflict in Southeast Asia more durable. However, there are a number of factors that have caused the durability of internal conflict in Southeast Asia and small arms themselves do not create conflict. It is the non-state armed groups who are in possession of small arms that cause the conflict. The use of small arms by non-state actors has caused thousands of civilian casualties in Southeast Asia and more often than not, has caused internal conflicts to escalate, making the conflict more durable and resistance to any outside intervention, such as mediation attempts. Another broad hypothesis when analysing the effect and influence small arms have on internal conflict would be to state, that small arms have increased the intensity of internal conflicts in Southeast Asia. However, once again this is not entirely correct. While the use of small arms by non-state actors in Southeast Asia has increased the amount of casualties in countries affected by internal conflict, a majority of these casualties have been accumulated over time, as in a number of decades. Instead, it is more likely that small arms use in Southeast Asia will mean that battles between insurgent groups and governments forces are likely to be more intense and frequent in areas that are prone to insurgent rebellion. This leads to the outcome of government forces trying to defeat insurgent groups in territories where the insurgents are based and as a result of this, gives insurgents more opportunities to launch raids and ambushes on government forces in order to gain possession of the small arms carried by the soldiers. In the case studies analysed in this thesis, most casualties were inflicted on civilians in the states where insurgent groups were based from, for example the states of Mindanao, Aceh, Karen and Shan.

All three countries analysed in this thesis have been highly affected by small arm use, which have made all of their internal conflicts prone to duration and frequency of fighting. Furthermore, the insurgents groups operating in these countries have been able

to continually find some form of arms supply which has allowed the insurgents to carry out armed conflict against government forces. It has been this ability to access a source of weaponry that has allowed many groups to rearm themselves after a period of inactivity. This was highlighted by the case of GAM who were able to resume active armed conflict after nearly being wiped out by government forces a number of years earlier. Furthermore, the MNLF have been linked to a recent insurgent uprising in the island of Jolo, despite not being involved in active armed conflict since 2001. However, it was the ability of the MNLF to still have access to small arms that allowed them to carry out armed conflict against the AFP. The resulting access of small arms by insurgent groups can to a large extent be put down to their ability to acquire funding and resources which can then be used to purchase small arms. Without any form of funding or income, insurgent groups would have to rely solely on internal methods to obtain arms such as battlefield acquisition, which is an irregular source of supply. Obtaining weapons from the black market or arms dealers' costs money, however, this method of obtaining arms has been crucial in sustaining many of the insurgent groups in Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines.

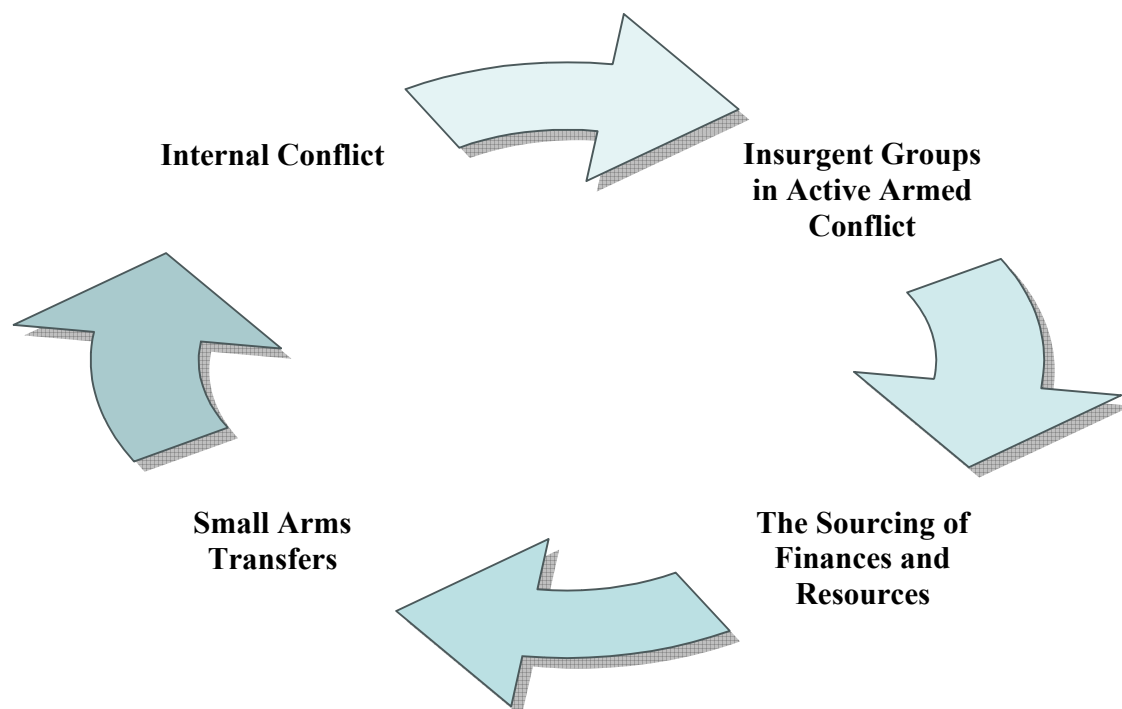
The overall context of this thesis has been to highlight a number of factors that affect the dynamics of small arms transfers to Southeast Asian insurgencies, using insurgent groups involved in current or recent armed conflict as the case studies. More specifically these factors were analysed using three key questions that would identify the characteristics associated with small arms transfers to insurgent groups: (1) What are the external and internal, financial and military sources of insurgent groups?; (2) What are the most important sources for obtaining small arms?; (3) How does the supply, use and accumulation of small arms affect internal conflict? These questions have provided the main research view points for this thesis and are reflected upon below.

Question 1: The Importance of Insurgents to Acquire Funding for their Rebellion

What most small arms studies fail to highlight is the importance of insurgent groups in Southeast Asia to acquire resources and funding which can then be used to sustain their

irregular army and more importantly buy small arms. This is shown simply in the diagram below. The ability of insurgent groups in Southeast Asia to acquire some form of finance has led to the purchase of small arms, which in turn has contributed to the onset and duration of civil war, which is reflected in a continuous cycle of conflict. This is especially the case in the three case studies analysed in this thesis. The resulting flow on effect occurs, because as an internal conflict or civil war continues it can become more advantageous for an insurgent group to keep the conflict going. Numerous reasons exist for this such as the ability of insurgents to acquire funding from opportunities that arise from extracting and selling resources (Ross, 2003:13). For the conflict to carry on insurgent groups need small arms to continue to engage government troops in combat. This means that to obtain arms that are not from battlefield acquisition, insurgent groups need a source of funding. Hence this is reflected in the continuous conflict cycle below.

Figure 6.1 The Continuous Conflict Cycle



The ability of insurgents to have easy access to global markets, “for the sale of plundered commodities and for the purchase of armaments” may be one of the factors why the

chances of peace “were much lower in the 1980s and 1990s than they had been previously” (Collier et al, 2004:268). The ability of these insurgent groups to purchase commodities and armaments from the black market is a direct result of the finances insurgents are able to obtain. While some foreign states continue to support insurgent or separatist movements, be it a low level since the end of the Cold War, they still can provide a source of income for a number of insurgent groups. Other sources of important funding as discussed in the case studies have included tax on the local population and business, criminal proceeds and kidnapping. Diaspora’s and revenues from trading in contraband goods and commodities like timber and drugs, such as marijuana and methamphetamines are especially vital in providing a source of income for insurgent groups.

The obtaining of internal finance for an insurgent group becomes even more important after the initial formation of the group. In the instance of all the insurgent groups in the case studies most of the groups were able to initially sustain themselves with money provided by overseas countries or other external supporters. However, if this funding dries up significantly or exists at a low level such as the insurgent groups operating in Burma and Indonesia, many of the groups may be forced into looting and exploiting natural resources in order to obtain some form of finance in order to pay for the operating costs of being involved in armed conflict with government forces. Resources such as timber, oil, minerals and metals become a greater priority in financing an insurgent group and allowing the internal conflict to continue, after initial support from an external supporter may have dried up. These resources can be used to purchase arms and ammunition and other commodities to ensure the survival of an insurgent group, after their initial formation.

The following tables categorise the forms of external and internal income and resources the six insurgent groups analysed in this thesis were previously, and are still currently able to obtain. The external table is broken down into three different sources of finance and resources, ranging from likely external sources to unlikely sources of external finances. The internal table of finance and resources follows the same methods, but has

been broken down into two different sources, thus being regular and irregular sources of finance and resources. The external financial income differs for most of the insurgent groups as many overseas countries are unwilling to back insurgencies for fear of the repercussions. It is also unlikely that aid previously given to insurgencies by external governments will not be the same now as it had been prior to the end of the Cold War. There is also geographical and strategic factors that are needed to be taken into account. For many insurgent groups in this study there is a threat that external aid from countries will continue to dry up. Instead, it is likely that many Islamic ideological based insurgent groups will rely on regional organisations to obtain funding, like Jemaah Islamiya. Many of the same methods used to acquire internal finance and resources by insurgents in countries like Indonesia, are the same as those insurgencies operating in both the Philippines and Burma, despite the geographical distance.

Table 6.1 Overall Summary of External Finance and Resources

	Likely	Possibly	Unlikely
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diasporas • Al Qaeda • Jermaah Islamiya 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thailand • Libya • Malaysia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China • Pakistan • Syria • Iran

As can be seen by the above table, Diasporas and Islamic organisations are perhaps the most likely source of income for the insurgent groups in the case studies. These Diasporas generally come from Muslim workers and followers who support the goals and are sympathetic to the causes of these insurgent groups. Diasporas are a more favourable form of aid to insurgent groups in Southeast Asia as the logistics that are involved through providing military goods can be far more complicated than just providing money. Diasporas can come from Muslim sympathisers in Southern Thailand, to overseas workers as far away as the Middle East. More recently, Al Qaeda in association with Osama bin Laden have been identified as a likely supporter of Muslim secessionist insurgent groups in the Philippines and Indonesia. This external support is likely to be funnelled through the regional organisation Jermaah Islamiya. Possible external supporters include; Thailand, Libya and Malaysia. It is unclear to what extent Thailand is

now involved in supporting Burma insurgencies, but support currently is likely to now be minimal. Libya are also probably currently involved in minimal or low level support for Southeast Asia insurgencies. Malaysia has frequently been accused by governments like Indonesia of supporting insurgencies, something consistently denied by the Malaysian government. Unlikely but still possible external suppliers of finance and resources to insurgent groups include; China, Pakistan, Syria and Iran. China was known to support the NPA during the 1960s and 1970s, but any support from their government is now presumed to be non-existent. Pakistan, Syria and Iran, have appeared in news reports about their possible involvement in insurgencies throughout Southeast Asia in the past, but little is known about their current involvement in any insurgent movements. External methods to obtain finance and resources can then be contrasted to the internal methods used by insurgents to obtain financial security. The following table highlights these internal finances and the resources the six insurgent groups analysed in this thesis have relied on.

Table 6.2 Overall Summary of Internal Finances and Resources

	Regular	Irregular
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade Gates – tax • Illegal Logging • Tax on Local Villagers • Tax on Business & Companies • The Trade & Cultivation of Marijuana • Villager Support & Donations • Islamic Charities • Revolutionary Taxes (NPA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug Trafficking • Crime • Kidnapping • Prostitution • Production of Crystal Methamphetamines • Piracy

The most important source of internal income for these insurgent groups tends to come from different form of taxation. For the KNU, one of their more important sources of income comes from charging tax on goods passing through trade gates on the Thailand and Burma borders. In general, tax on the local villagers was one of the major sources of income for the insurgent groups. This coupled with villager support and donations are also of vital importance, as it provides money as well as food and resources to the

insurgent groups. Revolutionary taxes the term described by the NPA for their taxation methods were of vital importance in securing some form of income for their group. Tax on business and companies also tends to be an important source of internal income for most of the insurgent groups. This is especially the case for most logging companies carrying out operations in insurgent controlled areas. They were especially targeted as a vital source of income. Furthermore, illegal logging was also a method employed by a number of the insurgent groups in this study; however taxation on the logging companies seemed to be the more preferable option. Other important sources of internal income tended to come from both the trade and cultivation of marijuana and donations from Islamic charities.

Less regular sources of internal income for the insurgents groups in the study came from drug trafficking, crime, kidnapping, prostitution, production of crystal methamphetamines and piracy. Drug trafficking was reported from time to time, but it seems that most of the insurgent groups prefer to produce drugs like marijuana before selling the crop on. Crime, kidnapping and prostitution are all possible sources of income mentioned for insurgent groups. The MNLF were also reported as being involved in the production of crystal methamphetamines. As far as piracy is concerned only GAM were reported to be involved in this method in order to obtain sought after contraband goods. Kidnapping is becoming a more prevalent trend with large ransom payments demanded. However, the main perpetrator of these activities has come from terrorist organisations like the Abu Sayyaf. Why there are numerous other sources of finances and resources available to these insurgent groups, these tend to be the most reported sources of methods used to obtain income. As has been shown, insurgent groups in Southeast Asia are likely to be extremely imaginative and innovative when searching for new forms or internal income. If more regular forms of income are lacking for insurgent groups like taxation from villagers and business, insurgent groups will look at other ways and means in which to secure some form of money or resources. After these finances have been secured, insurgent groups may then use the money to buy small arms, in order to carry out armed conflict.

Question 2: The Main Sources for Insurgent Groups in Obtaining Small Arms

The majority of small arms acquired by the insurgent groups in this study have come from internal sources. These have included; battlefield acquisition, leakage in government stockpiles and indigenous procurement. Small arms acquired through battlefield acquisition consist mainly of raids and ambushes on government forces. Raids are usually conducted on government weapons depots and military outposts, while ambushes usually occur on small groups of government troops. Leakage in government stockpiles is another common internal source of weapons for insurgent groups. This method of acquiring weapons includes; purchases from soldiers, defectors or corrupt officials and theft from government arsenals. Another internal source of small arms comes from indigenous production. In comparison to the other two main methods of acquiring weapons internally, this method is reasonably insignificant. In this study, apart from the MILF most of the other insurgent groups were not known or believed to have any operational facilities or abilities in which they could produce their own weaponry. At best a few groups like the NPA were believed to have the ability to make primitive pistols and shotguns.

In comparison, external methods of acquiring small arms for insurgent groups are much more erratic. This form of small arms supply includes purchases from black markets (generally from countries in the Southeast Asia region) and small arms transfers from other countries governments in the form of 'grey area' transfers. Other external methods of supply can come from commercial motivated sales or private arms dealers. This form of supply is dominated by purely financial and profit motivated gains for the seller. As far as black market supply is concerned, most arms purchases can be arranged through this method as long as the insurgent group can front up with the money. The Thailand black market tends to be the one of the most advantageous for acquiring small arms in Southeast Asia. Grey area or covert transfers largely depends on the internal political context of the country exporting the weapons at the time. During the Post Cold War era numerous countries exported small arms to insurgent groups to further their own ambitions and goals.

The main countries that were frequently mentioned as exporting small arms to insurgent groups in this study included; Libya, Malaysia, Thailand, China, and North Korea. Other countries that were mentioned rarely or on the odd occasion included; Cambodia, Cuba, Pakistan, Vietnam and Iraq. The extent to how many small arms are currently exported by countries like Libya and North Korea to insurgencies in Southeast Asia is still relatively unknown. However, as previously mentioned it is likely that the previous military aid given by Libya and Thailand to insurgents in the Philippines and Burma respectively is now minimal. It is also likely that military aid once provided by China to various Southeast Asia insurgencies is now non-existent, or occurs at a very low level, as part of grey area transfers. On the other hand, Malaysia is still frequently accused by neighbouring countries and other countries in the region of Southeast Asia of providing weaponry and logistical support to insurgent movements in the area, especially in the case of Islamic ideological based insurgencies. This has been frequently denied by the Malaysian government, on numerous occasions. Another source of external arms supply that is becoming more essential is from regional organisations like Jemaah Islamiya, who are funded from sources such as Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda. These internal and external sources of small arms can be summed up in the table below

Table 6.3 Overall Summary of External and Internal Sources of Small Arms

	Likely	Possibly
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Market Sales – Thailand & Cambodia • Malaysia • Jeemah Islamiya 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thailand • Libya • North Korea • Iraq • Cambodia • Cuba • China
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battlefield Acquisition • Leakage in Government Stockpiles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous Procurement

Previous literature on the subject of small arms transfers to insurgents groups has highlighted a number of main sources where insurgents are able to acquire armaments

from in Southeast Asia. Capie (2002) states that there are three main channels through which small arms pass through on the way to the illicit circuit, which include leakage, commercially motivated sales and grey area transfers. Klare (1998) highlights a number of sources that insurgent groups can obtain small arms from including; covert transfers black market sales, theft of government stocks and exchanges between criminal organisations. Kramer (2004) believes that there are two main sources for insurgents in obtaining small arms, thus being the black market and leakage in government stockpiles. Sislin and Pearson (2001) divided arms transfers into three main categories; importation, domestic procurement and indigenous production. Furthermore, they have also identified an arms supplier as being either; contiguous, regional or extraregional.

This thesis has expanded on these characteristics of small arms transfers to insurgent groups by analysing the supply of small arms from two different sources, external and internal. As far as external sources are concerned three main supply methods have been identified in this thesis. Firstly, overseas black markets are a significant source of small arm supply for numerous insurgent groups in Southeast Asia. As long as an insurgent group has the money, most arms purchases can be arranged through the black market. Two of the more popular black markets include both Thailand and Cambodia. Thailand is used as one of the main transit areas for any small arm transfers and is a logical place to purchase small arms from. Cambodia after previous civil wars is still home to a significant number of excess small arms, which has allowed arms dealers to establish pipelines. Secondly, grey area or covert transfers are another substantial source of small arms. The literature would tend to suggest that Malaysia is the main regional supplier of small arms to various insurgent groups. Extraregional sources include countries like North Korea and Libya. Thirdly, and what is becoming more considerable, is the logistical support provided to insurgents in Southeast Asia by regional organisations like Jeemah Islamiya, who not only provide finances but also weapons. These organisations have direct links to Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden.

When it comes to the internal sources of supply for small arms, this thesis has again identified three main methods of acquisition. First, there is battlefield acquisition, as in

weapons obtained through direct confrontation with government forces, or weapons acquired through raids and ambushes on government forces and depots. This method of obtaining weapons can also be part of the second main internal source for obtaining small arms, leakage. Leakage can arise from corrupt government soldiers or officials selling weapons, but it can also be used as a term to describe the loss of weapons in supply depots due to raids by insurgent groups. Finally, the remaining main method of obtaining small arms through internal methods is through, indigenous procurement or production. This method is the least likely of the three to be the most fruitful when an insurgent group is trying to source or establish a supply of arms. The only insurgent group in this study believed to have some sort of firearms factory with the capacity to produce small arms was the MILF. For many insurgent groups the technical abilities or resources required to produce small arms is virtually impossible or impractical. Hence, very few insurgent groups are even capable of producing their own arms.

Question Three: The Effects of Small Arms Use on Internal Conflicts

This thesis has focused on the effects of small arms use on internal conflicts in general, but has analysed in depth and more specifically two variables of internal conflict, duration and intensity. While perhaps it would have been more preferable to discuss other variables of internal conflict, due to time constraints, it was not practical. However, both duration and intensity are important variables to analyse when discussing the effects of small arms use by insurgent groups in internal conflict. Both the duration and intensity of internal conflict can be correlated with small arms transfers to insurgent groups. This leads to the issue of whether small arms transfers to insurgent groups leads to greater violence through the usage of small arms, which then contributes to the increased duration and intensity of internal conflicts.

Sislin and Pearson (2001) argue that three factors increase the duration of conflict when small arms are involved, these include; increased quantity of arms available, increased number of suppliers and the deployment of heavy weapons (ibid:91). As far as Southeast Asia is concerned to a large extent, this can also be considered to be the case. Most of the

insurgent groups in this thesis have lacked the ability to obtain small arms in bulk, have struggled to find numerous suppliers and have been deficient in the capacity or ability to operate heavy weapons. For most of the insurgent groups a lack of a foreign supplier has severely hampered any major military offensives they may have been planning. In the case of Burma, the lack of any foreign supplier for both insurgent groups has basically meant that they are solely reliant on internal methods to obtain arms, something which is not practical. This argument ties in with Sislin and Pearson's (2001) view that, duration of an internal conflict is dependent on the number of external suppliers. However, many of the insurgent groups have shown in this study that it is still possible to continue in an internal conflict situation with limited arms supplies and suppliers. While an external foreign supplier can be crucial in sustaining an insurgent group in conflict, internal sources of supply it can be argued are just as important. This was highlighted by GAM leader Hasan ti Tiro who placed too much emphasis on obtaining external support, which meant he neglected to achieve the support he needed internally to be able fight the Indonesian forces. This eventually led to GAM's military defeat soon after their initial formation.

Sislin and Pearson (2001) have also argued that the more external suppliers a non-state group receives the more commitment they will have to continue backing their client, which will also increase the duration of conflict in the long term. In the case of Southeast Asia this largely does not seem to be the case. For many of the insurgent groups in this study, their initial formation was backed by at least one external supplier. However, many of these suppliers who previously supplied arms to these insurgents groups during their formation, are no longer willing or in the position to supply small arms currently. The supply of small arms to insurgents has also increased the duration of conflict in Southeast Asia, as it has resulted in a form of military stalemate between the parties in the conflict. This is a factor that is understood by some insurgent groups, as highlighted by a GAM member who thought that the military stalemate was a benefit to his group, as they aimed to exhaust the Indonesian government financially. Neither side has been able to defeat the other through military means, which has resulted in numerous peace talks. This brings up the argument as claimed by all three governments in the case studies, that the insurgents

groups use these peace talks to regroup and rearm themselves, which has increased the duration of conflict in these countries. However, while there is evidence to suggest that this may possibly be true in some cases, it is hard to say whether it is government paranoia or fact. The concept of small arms use and the effects it has on the duration of internal conflicts can also be tied into the effects small arms have on the intensity of internal conflicts.

Generally it can be hypothesised that small arms plus the addition of heavier weapons (tanks, fighter aircraft, artillery etc.) that are involved in internal conflict the more intense the fighting will be, resulting in greater casualties. However, this may not always be the case as can be seen in third world countries where an ethnic grievance is involved. In some of these cases small arms are still the principal cause of casualties, for example Rwanda and Sudan. Sislin and Pearson (2001) argue that supplies of heavy weapons are more likely to lead to intense fighting than light weapons (ibid:93). Furthermore, Sislin and Pearson (2001) argue that the greater the number of arms suppliers, the more intense the fighting (ibid:93). In Southeast Asia the lack of heavy weapons for most of the insurgent groups has prevented many of the internal conflicts turning into full scaled civil wars. Generally heavy weapons have tended to be more an exception than a rule within the internal conflicts in Southeast Asia. However casualties have still been severe throughout many areas of the countries in the case studies. According to the Uppsala dataset on armed conflict (Gleditsch et al:2002) all of the conflicts in this study are generally either involved in intermediate armed conflict (at least 25 battle related deaths per year and an accumulated total of at least 1,000 deaths), or war (at least 1,000 battle related deaths per year). This has been mainly due to the ability of insurgent groups to carry out sustained fighting due to their ability to access some form of arms supply, whether external or internal. In the case of the Philippines guerrilla tactics and the use of small arms, not access to heavy weapons were perceived to be exacting higher casualties as well as increasing the duration of the conflict (Oxfam International:2001).

The intensity of many internal conflicts is also dependent not only on the supply of small arms, but also on the supply of ammunition. The SSA in Burma were more concerned

about ammunition preservation than finding a foreign supplier for small arms. This is something frequently overlooked by much of the current literature. Intense fighting within internal conflicts in Southeast Asia does also seem to be linked to having at least one foreign supplier. With a foreign supplier it allows the insurgent group the ability to have some form of continuous supply, instead of having to worry about obtaining arms through internal supply's, which can be erratic. This study has also found that due to the lack of supply in small arms most of the insurgent groups face, battles between insurgent and government forces occur on a frequent basis, but are of a relatively low intensity. Numerous reasons for this exist, such as the ability for the insurgent force to field enough troops and the lack of appropriate ammunition the group may have. Another perhaps more notable reason is that in many of the cases where insurgent groups are involved in conflict, it is for the explicit purpose of obtaining arms through the use of raids and ambushes. These 'hit and run' raids occur frequently by many of the insurgent groups in this study. For example, the NPA have formed 'sparrow units' with the explicit purpose of obtaining weapons from government forces. These kinds of tactics have seen an increase in the frequency of attacks on government forces, but occur within a relatively short time frame of fighting. In general the amount of small arms supplied to insurgent groups in Southeast Asia, will usually dictate both the duration and intensity of fighting within internal conflicts. The greater the access to supply an insurgent group has, the more likely it will be involved in continuous fighting.

6.2 Conclusion and Possible Policy Recommendations for Curbing the Use of Small Arms by Non-State Actors in Southeast Asia

As previously mentioned at the start of this chapter, the problem of small arms transfers to insurgents in Southeast Asia is becoming an ever-increasing problem. If this problem is not addressed by governments in Southeast Asia conflicts that are simmering in countries like Thailand, could become further intensified by the ability of insurgents to access a supply of small arms. Even if an insurgent group does not have a large infrastructure or support base, it may still be able to cause a significant amount of casualties, due to their ability to purchase or obtain a constant arms supply. The ability

of insurgent groups to access some form of arms supply can be connected to the lax laws and regulations that have been put in place by many of the governments in the region. These laws have allowed insurgents to obtain arms through corrupt government officials, resulting in the problem of leakage in government arsenals. In numerous cases poor stock counting systems in place have not picked up the missing weapons. This not only gives the opportunity for corrupt soldiers or officials to continue with their activities, but it also increases the black market trade in small arms.

One aspect that has been identified in this thesis is the ability of insurgent groups to obtain both internal and external finance. This correlated with the operational support from many villagers in areas sympathetic to the insurgents cause, has made it extremely tough for governments to defeat insurgent forces. As has been seen in Burma, if a government is able to target the finances of an insurgent group, it limits the effectiveness of that insurgent group to operate. It is astonishing that numerous governments throughout Southeast Asia have failed to target or acknowledge the ability of insurgents to obtain regular income and resources through external and internal sources. This method of targeting or limiting the amount of income an insurgent group receives does not solve the grievance problem of the insurgent group in the long-term. However, in the short term it may limit the ability of the insurgent group to obtain small arms. This is especially the case for insurgent groups who obtain small arms through external suppliers. Nonetheless, there is very little most governments can do, to stop insurgents acquiring small arms through internal methods. Raids and ambushes will usually take place on small groups of soldiers or on arsenal depots that have minimal security.

As this thesis has shown there are numerous supply channels and sources in which non-state actors like insurgent groups can obtain small arms. While it is one thing to identify the supply factors that contribute to small arms transfers, it is another issue altogether to address the factors that drive the demand for small arms. These demand factors lead to the misuse of small arms and the subsequent casualties that arise from their misuse. Thus, when analysing the dynamics of small arms transfers to insurgents in Southeast Asia, governments need to take into account both the 'supply' and 'demand' factors. By

addressing not only the supply factors but also the demand factors for small arms, governments in Southeast Asia will be able to identify the alternatives or economic choices available to insurgent groups. This again will involve analysing where insurgents receive their sources of funding from. Furthermore, it will open the door for future conflict management attempts as governments will be able to offer economic alternatives to insurgent groups still involved in active armed conflict.

A key feature in the research of small arm transfers that needs to improve in order for effective policies to be created is the need to develop more comprehensive forms of quantitative data on small arms. As discussed in Chapter Two there have been numerous improvements in research methodologies and data bases on small arms. However, there is still plenty of room for improvement. Creating a quantitative database on small arms would help future researchers analysing the problems associated with small arms transfers not only in Southeast Asia, but throughout other regions in the world. Nevertheless, the amount of research and studies using increasing sophisticated qualitative data and participative methodologies has increased dramatically over the last few years. It is the future job of researchers and academics to design studies like this thesis, that will help inform policy-makers in Southeast Asia and the rest of the world on how to best address the problems associated with small arms transfers to non-state actors.

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